Struggles for distinction: class and classed inequality in UK museum work

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I declare that all work presented represents the author's own work

Abstract

This thesis examines the discursive construction of class and classed inequality within UK museum work. Class and classed inequality have been relatively overlooked within the Organisational Studies (OS) literature, in part due to their contested nature as theoretical and discursive constructs. This thesis takes their contested nature as starting point, examining how they are constructed by UK museum workers in relation to their field and their career. Museum work has also been under-examined despite research showing its salient role in maintaining class distinctions. The thesis develops Bourdieu's conceptual framework combining it with a critical discursive approach to analyse interview, focus group and online data.

The thesis shows that class and classed inequality are not fixed but are contingent on a discursive struggle within and between contexts (i.e. societal, field and empirical). UK museum work is shaped by a struggle to *keep museums special* via *distinguishing knowledge* and *recognition* and the *disavowal* of the market. This diminishes economic capital as reward or requirement, valorises ways of having and being out of reach to many and obscures the unequal relationship between museum and worker. The museum career reinforces these processes and is necessarily exclusive classing workers according to their willingness and ability (habitus and capital) to play the game. The game is shaped by those with most power over discourse (e.g. funders, employers), legitimated through discourse (e.g. *a collections meritocracy*), and reinforced by the valorisation of discourse (e.g. becoming '*professional'*).

Class is further shaped by epistemological struggle between fields (sociology or history), types of knowing (objective or subjective) and who knows best (classifier or classed). This too is shaped by discursive power. The thesis challenges the taken-for-granted construction of class as occupation and advocates the career narrative as a way to know and show class pertinent to the museum field.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis examines class and classed inequality within UK museum work. It argues not only that class and classed inequality can be treated as discursive constructs but shows, through its own empirical examination, the importance and contribution of this approach. This is not to suggest class is 'only' discursive or to diminish economic inequalities, which have quite rightfully been pushed up the research agenda recently by scholars (e.g. Dorling, 2014; Piketty, 2014; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2017). Rather it is to show that the way in which we talk about class and classed inequality have important consequences for how they are seen (i.e. constructed as important or worthy of attention), understood and therefore addressed.

A further aim of the thesis is to examine the value of Bourdieu's theoretical framework in addressing this task. The theory of Bourdieu has been advocated by Organisational Studies (OS) scholars, and his concepts deployed to examine power dynamics in the workplace e.g. resistance (Dick, 2008; Vaughan, 2008), workplace bullying (Harrington et al., 2015), and complicity (Coupland, 2015), as well as the reproduction of inequalities in the workplace (Dick & Nadin, 2011; Riach, 2007, 2009a). Bourdieu's thinking has also enjoyed something of a renaissance within sociological class analysis (Atkinson, 2009; Bottero, 2004). This is in part due to the practical utility of his three concepts; field, capital and habitus (Tyler, 2015), and their empirical value in uncovering the implicit dynamics of power and inequality within a particular context (more on this below) (Bottero, 2004). However, few studies have yet operationalised all three of his concepts to examine class in a workplace, and fewer still have done so discursively. A discursive analysis allows one to pay attention to the processes by which objects (i.e. class), subjects (i.e. the working class worker) and relations (i.e. capital-labour) come to be seen or not seen and the effects of these ways of seeing or not seeing (See 1.5.1. for an explanation of discourse used in this thesis).

In this opening chapter I expand on these aims setting out further the rationale and value of doing this research. I position the thesis within the literature, explain my approach to the literature review; and define key terms.

A short preamble on terms: In the thesis title and research question below I have constructed an analytical distinction between 'class' and 'classed inequality'. This is because they emerge from two different literatures and were two separate empirical enquiries. This will be explained in more detail in Chapter Two and I also expand on these as terms in Section 1.5, but briefly, when I talk of class I mean the discourses which describe how a social space is divided (e.g. capital-labour, middle or upper class). When I talk of classed inequality I mean the discourses which describe and also contribute to inequality (e.g. the myth of meritocracy). For clarity and flow in this chapter however, I have primarily referred to class only.

1.1) Why class?

Until recently, class had been overlooked within the Organisational Studies (OS) literature. This absence has been noted in the fields of diversity (Holvino & Kamp, 2009; Hughes, 2004; Zanoni et al., 2010); management (Côté, 2011) and career development (Blustein et al., 2002; Hughes, 2004). OS scholars have suggested a number of reasons for the exclusion of class. Its neglect in favour of characteristics protected by UK law, such as gender, ethnicity and age (Randle et al., 2015); that class is invisible to those studying managerial practices (Côté, 2011), or the avoidance of the language of class relations by some organizational scholars (Acker, 2006).

One reason for its absence may be the contested nature of class. Whilst class has been somewhat overlooked in OS it has been the mainstay among sociologists, where debates over the question, *What is class*, have been longstanding and persistent. These fundamentally pivot between those who define class by position in the labour market (e.g. Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007), and those who focus on class as culturally constructed, located in historical, geographical and social contexts (e.g. Bourdieu, 1984; Savage, 2015). Underpinning these debates are epistemological struggles over how class is best known e.g. as an objective measure or a subjective identity, with questions then of who knows best, the classifier or the classed (Bottero, 2004; Crompton, 2008). Towards the end of the twentieth century, in a move described as the 'individualist turn' (Crompton, 2010, p. 20) a handful of social theorists questioned the utility of class as a principle way of explaining social reality (e.g. Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001; Pakulski & Waters, 1996). The argument went that the levelling experiences of war, globalisation

and social change, had diminished class as an organising principle in people's lives; it was thus a zombie category, alive in name only (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001; Cooper, 2008). The claims of its demise, did lead some sociologists and historians to turn their back on class, even if only for a while (Atkinson, 2009; Cannadine, 2000; Crompton, 2008, 2010).

A further explanation lies in the broader geopolitical context within which class is conceptualised. Class itself is not a neutral construct; it has political roots and political effects (Tyler, 2015). When Karl Marx advanced his seminal theory on class relations in 1848, it was not to contribute to the academy. It was with the intention of highlighting exploitation and of theorising how this could be overcome i.e. struggle and revolution (Grint & Nixon, 2015). Marx's version of class, as capital and labour, dominated the global political landscape for much of the twentieth century. In the UK it culminated in the Post-war industrial compromise between government and unions, in which collective action was contained in return for education, healthcare and decent wages (Crompton, 2008). However, the elections of Thatcher in the UK in 1979 and Reagan in the US in 1981 heralded a new ideological climate in the West; neoliberalism with the emphasis on free market, de-regulation and enterprise rather than state intervention and class relations (Bennett et al., 2010; Crompton, 2008). Thatcher in particular took aim at class, decimating both traditional sources of working-class organisation e.g. trade unions, mining communities, and council estates (Bennett et al., 2010; Tyler, 2015), as well as areas deemed to be undeservedly privileged e.g. the arts (Cannadine, 2000; Griffiths et al., 2008). Her government championed the enterprising and socially mobile individual, unencumbered by historic and structural (dis)advantage (Cannadine, 2000; Lawler, 2018; Tyler, 2015).This shifted the material and discursive landscape of class, such that not even New Labour, elected in the UK in 1997, championed talk of '*bosses and workers'* (Atkinson, 2010a). Class as a category and identity has become confused and stigmatised and is correspondingly difficult to construct as a neutral, or universally applicable, research object (Bottero, 2004; Reay, 2005; Tyler, 2015).

However, whilst class has become obfuscated in academic and everyday discourse, the inequalities that class describes appear to be increasing (Savage, 2015; Tyler, 2015). Income inequality is higher than it was in the 1980s, and predicted to increase (Dorling, 2014; McGuiness & Harari, 2019; Piketty, 2014); precarity at work is increasing,

(Huws, 2014; Standing, 2014) and social mobility in the UK has stagnated (Ashley et al., 2015; Friedman et al., 2015; Friedman & Laurison, 2019). Research has found that people from working-class backgrounds (as defined by parents occupation) able to access elite occupations, will still earn 17% less than their higher class colleagues (Friedman et al., 2015; Social Mobility Commission, 2019). This suggests that not only are the inequalities that class describes very much in force (Lawler, 2018; Tyler, 2015), but that organisational and occupational dynamics are implicated in re-producing them (Friedman & Laurison, 2019).

There is a paradox then, or maybe a tension; whilst talk of and clarity around, class has declined within everyday discourse, what could be described as 'classed' inequality has increased. This brief discussion shows that class is not an essentialised concept (despite attempts to construct it as such which I explore in Chapter Two) but is shaped by discourse. Marx's writings of class bring a particular discourse into use, whilst Thatcher's policies another. It also shows that not talking about class has effects, suggesting, as do Zanoni et al. (2010), that now it is time we do.

1.2.) Why museum work?

The thesis examines the discursive construction of class and classed inequality within the context of UK museum work. There is very little research on museums as a place of work either in the OS literature (which focusses on work) or the Museums Studies literature (which focusses on museum practice); let alone on issues of class. This is despite a growing interest in classed inequality in the UK cultural and creative sectors (Bennett et al., 2010; Taylor, 2016).

Museums are arguably implicated in practices which generate class distinctions (Bennett et al., 2010; Savage et al., 2005). Whilst museums claim universal appeal, the profile of museum visitors in the UK has remained stubbornly middle-class (Bennett et al., 2010; Taylor, 2016), such that museum-visiting is used as proxy for class (Savage, 2015). Indeed, scholars argue that museums, or at least some museums, are complicit in constructing and institutionalising a dominant culture (Bennett et al., 2010; Savage et al., 2005). What is known of museum work is limited but research suggests that museums have appealed as places of distinction to donors, politicians (Bennett, 1995;

Grenfell & Hardy, 2007) and trustees (Griffiths et al., 2008). Studies show how distinction can be used as political capital (Gray, 2015; see also Mendoza, 2017) and economic power (Frey & Meier, 2006; Grenfell & Hardy, 2007). I explore this more fully in Chapter Three.

The choice of museum work was also inspired by my own experience. I worked in the field for almost 20 years (as noted below). I was aware that whilst efforts had been made to reach out to new audiences, there was a deafening silence on class. Rather the focus was on questions of race, age or disability. There had also, to my eyes, been very little attention on addressing inequality within the workforce from employers, trade unions or professional bodies. And yet I was pretty sure I had bumped up against it, not least when I worked in particular institutions (e.g. national art museums), with people in particular roles (art museum director or curator).

The choice of museums was also a practical one. It is a relatively small sector in the UK, with an estimated 2,500 museums (Museums Association, 2019) and 46,000 employees (Arts Council England, 2016). Hence it was possible to get a good sense of the overall field. And I had a head start in terms of knowing which organisations to approach in my initial pilot study. It is also, as I discuss in Chapter Three, a site which is diverse in terms of work roles. Hence I was aware that it would be a potentially valuable site in terms of examining discursive 'struggle'.

1.3) Positioning the research

I take the contested nature of class as a starting point rather than a limitation. Hence I explore not *What is class,* but what are the discourses by which certain versions of class are seen and others not seen. I am not proposing that the economic or cultural differences that class describes are reducible to discourse. Rather I aim to build on the arguments made by others, that 'class' and classing are a way of describing society (Lizardo, 2019) which have effects (Tyler, 2015), and thus deserve a critical lens.

1.3.1) Positioning the research: epistemological and theoretical orientations

In undertaking a discursive analysis of class, my epistemological orientation is a social constructionist one. I view knowledge as contingent and situated, rather than

essentialist, universal and 'discoverable', (Burr, 2015; Burr & Dick, 2017) taking this position not just to class, but to the field of museum work and the museum career. I also adopt a critical view of these constructions. Class is necessarily bound up with inequality and hence power, and discourses of class invariably benefit some groups over others. I thus adopt a critical discursive lens, adapting Fairclough's model (1992) as a methodology in order to explore these dynamics.

A further aim is to explore the value of Bourdieu's theory for a discursive examination of class and classed inequality. Bourdieu's framework has been increasingly advocated by OS scholars as a 'grand theory' (Chudzikowski & Mayrhofer, 2011); a way of connecting an individual to context and from which to examine, for example, career (Chudzikowski & Mayrhofer, 2011), occupational fields (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008), occupational change (Everett, 2002), institutionalised ways of behaving (Harrington et al., 2015; Vaughan, 2008) and the practice of diversity (Riach, 2007; Tatli & Özbilgin, 2012). His conceptual trilogy of field, capital and habitus (this is explained in section 1.5 and in Chapter Two) is becoming increasingly popular as a way of examining the sometimes invisible barriers to social mobility. Studies for example have thus shown how the seemingly neutral forms of cultural capital e.g. accent, dress, taste, are mobilised as ways of getting in and getting on within a range of occupational fields such as accountancy (Friedman & Laurison, 2019), acting (Friedman et al., 2017), advertising (McLeod et al., 2009), law (Ashley & Empson, 2013), professional service firms (Ashley & Empson, 2017) and TV (Friedman & Laurison, 2019; Randle et al., 2015). These studies thus show how classed processes (i.e. those that benefit groups with more capital) happen explicitly and implicitly in particular fields.

Discourse scholars have also reminded us that Bourdieu's is a theory of language and power (Dick & Nadin, 2011; Riach, 2007; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). His concepts of a field as a site of discursive struggle shaped by misrecognition (i.e. when economic advantages are rendered invisible) and doxa (when processes are taken-for-granted) (See section 1.5 for an explanation of terms) are valuable in explaining how power is variably contested, complied with and taken-for-granted. Scholars have co-opted his concepts to examine struggles over power (Dick, 2008; Vaughan, 2008), struggles **over** discourse (e.g. Harju & Huovinen, 2015; Vos & Craft, 2017) and struggles **through** discourse (Harrington et al., 2015). However few studies have approached Bourdieu's

theory holistically and discursively, examining how class and classed inequality are constructed in relation to the dynamic struggles (and hence deployment of power) within and without a field. This is the focus of this PhD to explore not just the capital valued, but the discursive processes by which capital comes to be valued.

There are limitations within Bourdieu's theory which critical research in OS can address. Bourdieu's concept of habitus aims to explain why a 'classed' individual acts in particular ways (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984, 1992b). It draws on psycho-analytical theory to describe a set of pre-conscious dispositions which a person acquires from primary socialisation (Silva, 2016). The concept of habitus has been criticised for being too deterministic and under-theorised, and in later years Bourdieu himself seemed to abandon it (Bennett et al., 2010). In this thesis, I re-work the concept as one of an 'ideal habitus'. This borrows from the work of feminist and critical career scholars, and the concept of the ideal worker (Acker, 2006), to shift the analytic lens away from what certain people do, to discourses of what is expected. This thus locates classed effects not in the disposition of the individual, but in the normative construction of career (more on this in Chapter Two). I also develop Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital and symbolic power to one of discursive power, to show how these processes are maintained or challenged through discursive processes (more on this in Chapter Four).

1.3.2) Positioning the research; the literature

The home for this research is the discipline of Organisational Studies (OS), a field of study concerned with organisations in society. It is whilst studying for an MSc in Occupational Psychology (which is itself positioned within the wider field of OS) at Birkbeck, that I developed an academic interest in discourse analysis, and issues of critical diversity and career development. It is OS literature that provides the methodological base on which I build, as well as an empirical base on which to contribute. Critical diversity scholars within OS have problematised the celebrated discourse of diversity, challenged taken-for-granted discourses of 'diverse' characteristics, and shown how power and context matter (Dick & Nadin, 2011; e.g. Tatli, 2011; Tatli & Özbilgin, 2012; Zanoni et al., 2010, 2017; Zanoni & Janssens, 2015). Similarly critical career scholars within OS have challenged how discourses of career benefit some and not others, in particular the gendered, aged and raced concept

of the ideal worker (e.g. Duberley & Cohen, 2010; Moore, 2009). Whilst a groundswell of interest in class is emerging (which I discuss in Chapter Two) there has as yet been little discursive attention. This thesis thus aims to make an empirical contribution to both these literatures by doing so.

Whilst primarily located in OS however, the thesis necessarily takes a detour into the broader field of sociology. This follows the traditions of other OS scholars such as those looking at careers who have borrowed from the work and thinking of sociologists (Gunz et al., 2011; Moore et al., 2007). This is primarily (though not exclusively) where theories of class have been developed. In the literature review I explore the debates over class as economically, culturally or discursively constructed. And also outline the theory of Bourdieu on which this thesis is based. By adapting a view of class as a discursive construct, and using Bourdieu's theory in this way, it thus aims to make a contribution to current debates on class.

The thesis builds on a body of sociological literature which takes a discursive approach to class. This encompasses a growing number of studies, largely aiming to rebuff the claim that class is dead, by showing either how class is diminished and stigmatised politically (Jones, 2011; Lawler, 2018; Tyler, 2015) or how class is deployed as a powerful everyday discourse (e.g. Atkinson, 2010a; Harrits & Pedersen, 2018; Irwin, 2015, 2018; Savage, 2007; van Eijk, 2013). These have found that by locating class in a particular context people are able to see class and talk about it fluently (Irwin, 2015, 2018). And by avoiding pre-conceived ideas of class, people spontaneously talk about it as an organising principle and also as a source of inequality (Atkinson, 2010a; Harrits & Pedersen, 2018; van Eijk, 2013). Scholars have also imputed the more subtle ways in which it reflects discourses of value, such as the neoliberal focus on individual self-improvement (van Eijk, 2013). These studies have not explored classing in a work context where – given the longstanding connection between class and work – it may well take on a particular form. And few have yet taken a critical look at the discursive processes by which certain versions of class are seen and not others. This too is an area to which this thesis can add insights.

This thesis thus builds on discursive approaches used in critical literature within OS and borrows theoretically and empirically from sociology. It also takes a detour into

Museum Studies (the study of museum practices) which informs our understanding of how the field of museums has thus far been researched and forms the basis of some of Chapter Three.

1.3.3) Positioning the research; the researcher

My personal interest in this thesis comes from a number of places; a longstanding orientation to a politics of equality and social justice, a fascination with history (my first degree) including people's personal career journeys, and a working life in museums which spans the time that class gradually disappeared from view. I started with a job at the V&A Museum when Thatcher was still in power (as was Communism, just) and finished with a post in marketing at the National Gallery, just at the beginning of the financial crash and austerity.

The MSc programme at Birkbeck was also instrumental in shaping my thesis journey. It was only when I started to study and research careers at Birkbeck that I acknowledged the broader influences on my own. This showed me the power of reflection as a tool for both researcher and participant. And it was from my MSc research that I was prompted to look at class. Whilst interviewing participants for a project exploring age, gender and career development, it became clear that what mattered to many participants was in fact class. This shaped not only their beginnings, but also the journey, how far they could travel, their sense of lack, difference and also achievement. Class was invoked by the work their parents did (sometimes mostly the father), the area they grew up in, the normative expectations of those around them and the knowledge or expectations of family. This I discovered was a similar experience for other researchers, who having set out to examine one form of inequality, found that class was bought to the fore (e.g. Ashley & Empson, 2013; Randle et al., 2015).

My early interest in history has no doubt shaped the research. Bourdieu is described as a historical sociologist (Friedman & Laurison, 2019) and decried the fact that sociology and history had become two separate disciplines (Friedman & Savage, 2018). It is through history, he argues, that we can see how an object (e.g. a field) becomes constructed, gains power, loses power or is potentially instituted as an everyday and taken for granted practice (Bourdieu, 1992b). I have found that tracing a history,

however roughly delineated, provides a different way into a subject. It helps orientate and connects a practice or discourse to a broader and changing context, as well as saying something of that context. I have thus been alert to the museum field as one constructed in response to past practices and narratives; and on a smaller scale recognise this within the construction of career. As Bourdieu argued, the field and the individual are a meeting of two histories (Bourdieu, 1993).

Having a career in marketing and communications has also facilitated my interest in discourse. I am aware that language does things. However, using language to do things is not the same as using it to know things. It took me a while to work out my own position on (or confidence to say) what I meant by discourse. I discuss this in greater detail in Chapter Four, but to outline it briefly here. I take a view of discourse similar to Fairclough's (1992) early position, as a set of ideas through which an object can come to be known (e.g. class as capital-labour), that some discourses have more power than others, and this is partly to do with how they become institutionalised through practice (e.g. the taken for granted discourse of a labour market in which workers compete for jobs, compared to the newer discourse of 'essential key workers'). I also share Fairclough's (1992) view, that whilst discourse is not the whole story, it is an important part and also an important route to seeing other parts (practice, people and power) too.

My approach to discourse, and this whole research, has been as a journey. I didn't start out with clear positions and as with all PhD researchers have made a number of decisions along the way to shape, form and contain the research.

1.4) Rationale and research question

The discussion above addresses why I am undertaking this research, how I am designing it and which literature I am speaking to. Here I summarise and introduce the research question. The research aims to address a gap, class in OS, and to do so in a particular way. It takes the contested nature of class as a starting point and argues that an important task is to examine how class and classed inequality are discursively constructed. It does this by combining Bourdieu's theoretical framework with critical discourse analysis, focusing on his theory as one of language and power. In particular it focusses on his theory of field as a site of discursive struggle, from which one can then

delineate power dynamics. In lieu of habitus, it considers how construction of career constructs an ideal habitus. It examines these processes within the under-researched field of UK museum work.

The research question is: *How do people who work in UK museums construct class and classed inequality in relation to their field and their career?*

The task this sets is twofold; a) to explore the discursive processes by which field and career are constructed by people who work in UK museums, b) to then examine how class and classed inequality are talked about in relation to these contexts.

1.5) Defining terms

Below I expand on the *Terms used in the research question* (1.5.1) and then more generally outline the other *Terms used within the thesis* (1.5.2).

1.5.1) Terms used in the research question

UK Museums

Defining museums is not a straightforward task (Hudson, 2014). As Candlin (2017) shows (see Chapter Three) there are six definitions of museums from recent times, two currently in circulation in the UK, and an International Standing Committee is currently attempting a global, all-encompassing version (ICOM, 2019). Taking Candlin (2017)'s pragmatic view one can see that most definitions of a museum cohere around an institution (building), that maintains a collection of objects (inanimate), which is made available to the public. Housing public collections, as we will see in Chapter Three, has evolved from traditions of intellectual inquiry and also as symbols of wealth and distinction. Whilst some museums do not have a building or a collection (the Museum of Homelessness for example), most scholars would argue that collecting is something of a backbone to most museums (Macdonald, 2006). I propose that a museum is thus distinguished by its stewarding of a collection for purposes of knowing and showing. See also Chapter Three for a fuller discussion.

People who 'work' in UK Museums

This may seem like a straightforward definition i.e. an individual who works in a UK museum. However some caveats need to be considered. Museum work comprises a range of occupational roles including curator, conservator, educator, interpreter, fundraiser, marketing, management, front of house, security and cleaning. Indeed it is this diversity that makes it an interesting site to explore. Furthermore, as we will see in the findings section, these roles are mediated by context so that curatorial roles in national museums are more specialist than those in smaller museums. I discuss the different types of role in detail in Chapter Three, and my findings in Chapter Seven.

A further consideration is that some people who work in UK museums may not work in a museum but an organisation related to a museum, such as a funding body, membership organisation or university department for example. Furthermore there are people who work freelance, those who are 'between' work, those who have now left the field, either temporarily or for good, and those who 'work' but do not get paid for their work, volunteers and interns. There is an estimated 93-95,000 volunteers in UK museums (Mendoza, 2017), which is more than double the estimated number of people who work in UK museums (Arts Council of England, 2019) (although these figures come from different organisations which may be using different methodologies).

For the purposes of this thesis I based my definition on Bourdieu's concept of field (see 1.5.2) below and also Chapter Two). This defines an occupation not functionally but relationally, as a struggle for shared stakes. I therefore took a very broad view of which positions may be contributing to a "struggle" rather than imposing my own boundaries. I was also guided empirically as to what these stakes may be, building up an iterative picture as described in Chapter Four. Hence my definition of 'people who work in UK museums' included all those who had a (potential) stake in the field including all positions, paid and unpaid (i.e. volunteers), people wanting to work in museums and those who used to but had now left (i.e. were now working in another field). When it came to recruitment for the research, I veered towards inclusion rather than exclusion.

Construct (Discourse)

In the research question I ask how people 'construct' class and classed inequality and also field and career. By this I mean what are the discursive processes by which

different versions of these concepts are bought into use and with what effects. I explain my approach to discourse in greater detail in Chapter Four, and also explain discursive approaches to class in Chapter Two. I also mention it above but to reiterate here, by discourse I mean a set of ideas by which a particular object comes to be known; for example a discourse of class as having money, versus class as having manners. By discursive processes I mean how some ideas are more openly contested, whilst some are taken-for-granted, e.g. a meritocracy may be a contested way of describing the UK education system; but the idea that individuals look for work in a competitive labour market is more taken-for-granted.

Class

Debates over the definition of class, have been the mainstay of sociological class analysis for over 150 years (Crompton, 2008), and are discussed in detail in Chapter Two. My approach to class is to see it not as an essentialised or universal category, but as a discourse which describes the way a social space is structured and on what basis; i.e. what is valued. It is thus a structuring and valuing construct, also dependent on time, place and 'classifier". For example, Marx's theory could be described as a discourse of class as capital-labour (Crompton, 2008); Bourdieu's theory could be seen as a discourse comprising consumption as well as production (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984, 1987) whilst Thatcher's view of class is an atomised one based on the attributes of an 'enterprising individual' (Cannadine, 2000). As mentioned earlier, this is not to deny the importance of material inequalities, but rather to shift the lens to exploring how these inequalities are made visible and important - or not - through discourse.

Classed Inequality

Whilst class describes the way a social space is structured and on what basis, classed inequality describe the way these processes are constructed as unfair. Again my perspective is to view this as a discursive process. Hence, from a Marxian view, classed inequality comes about not only though the unequal relationship between capital and labour but because the dynamics of capitalism lead to exploitation of workers (Crompton, 2008). For Bourdieu, it is a question of a 'dominant' class defining the cultural capital that matters (Bourdieu, 1984, 1987). And for Thatcher classed inequality did not really exist (Cannadine, 2000). Fundamental to these processes is the question

of power: economic, cultural and discursive (see 1.5.2). Those with the most 'capital' are likely to have most power and want to retain a status quo (Bourdieu, 1987, 1989).

Field

I use Bourdieu's concept of field which is discussed in detail in Chapter Two. In short, it describes a social space in which institutions and individuals are positioned in relation to a particular practice (Bourdieu, 1987, 1989, 1993; Bourdieu & Nice, 1980; Flemmen, 2013). This can be a practice of sport, culture (Webb et al., 2008), or, as in this case, work. It goes beyond a functional definition e.g. all museums, to consider a broader network in which positions e.g. organisations and occupational roles, are in a dynamic struggle to acquire power and say what matters in the field. In the field of UK museum work it might include professional associations, funding bodies, university departments and trade unions, as well as national, local authority museums or heritage sites, and a range of roles as discussed above, including for example designer, funder, researcher, volunteer (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008). Field is part of a conceptual trilogy comprising capital and habitus as described below.

Career

Again career is a contested concept (Gunz et al., 2011). My concern is not to define it but to use it as a tool to understand how discourses of career invokes particular ways of being (habitus) and having (e.g. capital), and the way this shapes constructions of class and classed inequality. However, I acknowledge that academic and everyday discourse are different. Hence scholars have attempted to define career broadly as in this example "the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time" (Arthur, Hall, and Lawrence 1989, p. 8). However, in everyday discourse I was aware that career has a classed connotation i.e. that middle-class people have careers and working-class people have jobs (Thomas, 1989). Hence within recruitment for the fieldwork I avoided using the language of career using the term work instead (See also Chapter Four).

1.5.2) Terms used in the thesis

Capital

This is Bourdieu's concept and I explain this more fully in Chapter Two. He theorised capital as a currency by which people could improve their position within a field. It comprises economic capital (income, property and assets), social capital (who you know) and cultural capital including institutional (qualifications and education) embodied (cultural tastes, dress and activities) and objectified (possessions) (Bourdieu, 1987). It also includes symbolic capital, which is capital recognised as valued by those in a particular field. Hence, for example, in museum work being known as the expert of a certain collection is recognised as symbolic capital, whereas it may not be outside this field.

In Chapter Four I also discuss linguistic capital which is a form of cultural capital which relates to one's value in a linguistic market (e.g. being able to speak with a particular accent). I develop this to one of discursive power (see below). In Chapter Seven I also describe capital within relation to the museum field, as *distinguishing capital* and *discursive capital.* These define the ability to be able to gain distinction and recognition for one's institution, work and self within the UK museum field.

Discursive power

I develop discursive power as a particular iteration of Bourdieu's theory (and by combining his concepts of linguistic capital, misrecognition, symbolic violence, doxa, and symbolic power) which I describe in detail in Chapter Four. It describes how certain discourses come to be more powerful than others (i.e. having 'won' a struggle) because of the capital underpinning them (i.e. power **over** discourse), because they are deployed in ways that then legitimate existing power relations (i.e. power **through** discourse), and because they can be used to further one's own power (power **of** discourse). It is thus related to Bourdieu's notion of a field as a site of struggle; in which players compete not only for valued capital but for the discursive power to name the capital that is valued. In my findings I show how national museums in the UK have power **over** discourse (a mandate to lead the sector, and hence to name the capital and the collections most valued), that this is legitimated **through** the discourse of *a collections meritocracy* which constructs an inherent merit in a 'collection' and distances it from

the money and power invested in it in the first place. It also then constructs the national museum, and proximity to their collections, as a form of valued capital that everyone wants to add to their CV (power **of** discourse). I illustrate discursive power throughout the findings and also discuss it in Chapter Seven.

Distinction

I also use the term distinction throughout the thesis. This is a part nod to Bourdieu's seminal work *Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984), which explored the relationship between cultural activities and tastes and the construction of classed boundaries. I use it to illustrate the discursive processes by which certain positions are constructed as **distinct from** each other, and also **better than** one another. I explain this further in Chapter Five.

Doxa

This, another Bourdieu concept, explains how everyday practices and discourses are taken-for-granted and not often given to critical reflection. The practice of competing in a job market (Dick & Nadin, 2011) or of managing performance at work (Harrington et al., 2015) for example. I use it to show how certain discourses (e.g. class-as-occupation) gain power because they are used in a taken-for-granted i.e. doxic, way, and have effects which are not readily questioned.

Habitus

This is the third of Bourdieu's conceptual trilogy along with field and capital and is also discussed in detail in Chapter Two. It describes the internalised dispositions acquired by an individual from their primary socialisation, a 'socialized subjectivity' (Grenfell & Hardy, 2007, p.28) and in this way can be classed. Bourdieu theorised that it determines how a person navigates their way through the world e.g. choosing to go to university based on family expectations. It is a problematic construct and I develop it to focus less on the individual to one which focusses on the expectations of a particular 'subjectivity' within the workplace; an ideal habitus. This is discussed in 2.2.3.

Misrecognition

This is Bourdieu's concept which describes how symbolic capital comes to be valued within a field and is seen to be natural and neutral, rather than underpinned by economic

capital. In my findings I show how the discourse of a collections meritocracy for example constructs museum collections as having an inherent value and misrecognises the economic capital underpinning them (e.g. donated or collected by wealthy people).

Symbolic power

This describes how groups that have dominant amounts of symbolic capital (as recognised in a field; for example being part of a 'magic circle' law firm (Ashley & Empson, 2013); or a national museum) can then shape the way capital is valued by others. This can be via discourse and more nuanced social practices such as having an exclusive 'national museum group'. I have re-articulated this to focus on the discursive aspects within my findings and hence called it discursive power (see above).

Symbolic violence

This is Bourdieu's concept which explains how the dominant in a field not only retain their power through symbolic means (i.e. misrecognition) but do so in a way that disadvantages others (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This disadvantage is taken-for-granted. Dick and Nadin (2011) show how the managerial discourse of 'a psychological contract' which has gained reified status in some OS literature and demands particular ways of being at work (i.e. being committed and finding meaning beyond pay), inflicts symbolic violence against low-paid, low-status staff in care homes who cannot conform with its assumptions. Another recent empirical example is where HR managers sanitise accounts of workplace bullying through the discourse of performance management which is an act of symbolic violence against the complainant (Harrington et al., 2015).

1.6) Searching the literature

I embarked on the literature search with very little knowledge of class. An initial search for "social class" on Birkbeck library's *Discover* search engine revealed 266,584 articles for the last 100 years, and 70,419 articles for the last 5 years. It was clear that a strategy was required. Here I describe how I approached the task, as a pragmatic, iterative and critical process. Throughout the process, I have attempted to follow Bourdieu's advice that scholars should question the concepts that come to them already "*conquered, constructed and confirmed*" (Bourdieu, 1992b, p.42).

1.6.1) Exploring: finding the conversations

When I started the literature search it was, as I say, with very little knowledge of the literature on class or on museum work. I also did not have clear sight of the final research question. My aim was therefore exploratory; to develop a confident knowledge of what was being said about class, classed inequality, and museum work.

Due to the size of the literature on class, I piloted search-terms on a number of databases (Discover, ABI Inform, and Web of Science) before finally settling on "social class and career", "social class and workplace" "socioeconomic status and workplace" "equality and workplace" "social-mobility" as the most distinct and fruitful, using ABI Inform.

The literature on museums is much smaller and more manageable than the literature on class and work. An initial search on Birkbeck Library's *Discover* search suggested a paucity of research within OS on my particular research area, class and museum work. I thus conducted a literature search on more focussed databases: Jstor, Academic search complete and A & H Complete using a range of search terms "Museum", "Museum work", "Museum workforce", "Museum and social mobility", "Museum and diversity", "Museum and social class". I also used terms that had been prominent in the some of the literature; "Museum management", "Museum profession".

I combined this exploration with a more focussed search in journals. These were those that were prominent in the above searches and also those based on my own knowledge from studying for the MSc. I searched for either "social-class" in OS journals (e.g. *Academy of Management Review; Career Development Quarterly; Journal of Vocational Behaviour; Human Relations; Organization; Organization Studies, Work, Employment & Society)*, or "career" in sociological journals *(e.g. Sociology; Sociological Review)* as well as looking for more specific concepts that emerged through further reading (e.g. symbolic capital or class dis-identification).

For museum specific articles, I searched on specific Journals that had also frequented my pilot searches including *Artjournal, Cultural Trends, International Journal of*

Heritage Studies, International Journal of Cultural Tourism, Journals of Material Culture, Museum Management and Curatorship, Museum International, Museum & Society, Public Historian.

From this initial approach I built up a sizeable list. I sorted literature into particular approaches - those that looked at class as a variable with their focus really on something else; and those that explored the processes that lead to classed inequality and hence provided theoretical insights. It was from this latter group that I developed my interest in Bourdieu. It was also clear at this stage that there really was very little research on class in museum work.

1.6.2) Anchoring; listening to the conversations

I began to focus the initial search above by then anchoring it within particular research conversations. These included conversations within OS and sociology around the best way to theorise and measure class; the value of using Bourdieu at work; the value of using Bourdieu to examine class and classed processes at work; how class shapes work and how work shapes class; everyday classing; diversity within cultural work; museum practice and museum work. I followed these conversations via a certain amount of detective work e.g. using the references from the above papers; following up the work of seminal authors and following their forward citations on databases and on Google Scholar.

I shored these up by also addressing key texts on Bourdieu including Bourdieu's own books (e.g. Bourdieu, 1984, 1992a, 1993; Bourdieu & Darbel, 1991), articles (e.g. Bourdieu, 1987, 1989, 1992b), and texts about and using Bourdieu (Bennett et al., 2010; Grenfell & Hardy, 2007; Savage, 2015; Webb et al., 2008). I also consulted texts on social theory and sociology at work to anchor these debates (Crompton, 2008; Grint & Nixon, 2015).

I also consulted key theoretical texts on museums including Tony Bennet's work, *The Birth of the Museum* (Bennett, 1995); Eileen Hooper Greenhill's Foucauldian analysis, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992); and the *Handbook of Museum Studies (Macdonald, 2006; 2011).*

I have also consulted texts on critical discourse analysis, including *Discourse and Social Change*; (Fairclough, 1992) *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002): *Discourse Analysis: Investigating Processes of Social Construction* (Phillips & Hardy, 2002); and *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies* (Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

1.6.3) Keeping up to date with the conversations

The conversations outlined above are very much ongoing. Throughout the life of the PhD, I have kept up to date by following certain authors and journals on social media, attending conferences and following up the work of other presenters, as well as recommended reading from conferences and training courses attended. In writing the discussion for the PhD and also in writing a paper for *Gender, Work and Organization*, I have revisited key texts and literature (which is a great indication of how much your thinking and ideas have developed).

I also collated a certain amount of "grey" literature on museum work as part of my initial scoping phase (see Chapter Four on Methods) which I have also used in part as context-setting literature. This was done as a mixture of asking participants in Phase One and also through looking at the websites of key organisations; these are detailed more fully in Chapter Four.

The resulting review is a critical and focussed synthesis of the key issues relating to the research questions. In Chapter Two I explore how class and classed inequality have been constructed in the literature, and build the case for examining field, career, class and classed inequality as discursive constructs, using Bourdieu. In Chapter Three I examine what is, and what we know of, the field of UK museum work.

1.7) A note on time and place

On a final note, in respect of context, this research was conducted at a particular time and place. When I started the research in October 2016, Britain had just voted to leave the EU and the US was about to vote in Trump. It seemed to me (though clearly with a heightened ear), that class was being talked about everywhere, shrouded in discourses

of entitlement and political disenfranchisement (‘*the liberal metropolitan elite’, the ‘left behind’, the ‘white working class’ the ‘dust bowls’* in the US). Brexit dominated the news for the majority of the time I was conducting this PhD and appeared to have re-classed the UK along Leave-Remain, local-global, tradition-change, lines. This may seem a re-drawing of the discourse between capital-labour but is essentially still a battle about power; power to control the ‘discourse’ of what the UK should be, and who should have that say.

No-one could have foreseen the context in which this thesis is completed; the global pandemic of COVID-19. The rapid adjustment of governments and people has shown the power and also the limits of discourse. Delivery drivers, cleaners, hospital workers have been placed on a pedestal as ‘essential’ key workers, clapped for, celebrated in adverts and in artwork. However, how far this really changes the working conditions or status of these roles is not simply down to changing the discourse (though this helps) but changes in practice too; this relies on action, on people doing things, as much as people thinking things. Action by employers, government, customers and workers too.

Chapter Two: Class and classed inequality

In Chapter One I outlined my approach to the literature review. The focus of this chapter is to critically synthesize this literature and make a case for researching class and classed inequality as discursive constructs using Bourdieu's theoretical framing. The research question which frames this is *How do people who work in UK museums construct class and classed inequality in relation to their field and their career?*

The literature upon which this Chapter draws warrants some explanation. Whilst the thesis overall is positioned within the field of Organisational Studies (OS) as we have seen in Chapter One, class and classed inequality have been relatively overlooked within this discipline. Scholars have noted this absence in various OS sub-fields such as diversity research, mainstream (Scully & Blake-Beard, 2006) and critical (Zanoni et al., 2010), in careers research (Blustein et al., 2002; Hughes, 2004), in human resource management (Belmi & Laurin, 2016), and within organisational processes more generally (Acker, 2006; Amis et al., 2019). This is not to say class has not been addressed at all (e.g. Acker, 2006; Ashley & Empson, 2013; McLeod et al., 2009), but that class has not yet gained the level of prominence it perhaps warrants given the centrality of organisational processes in contributing to class and classed inequality (as I will show below) (Acker, 2006; Amis et al., 2019). By contrast, class and classed inequality have been something of a mainstay within the field of sociology for the last 150 years, particularly around the question *What is class*?. It is research and thinking from this field therefore which informs much of the discussion in the first part of the chapter below (2.1). In the second part of the chapter I draw on work from both OS and also sociology including critical work on social mobility (e.g. Friedman & Laurison, 2019; Friedman & O'Brien, 2017; Lawler, 2018; Reay, 2018).

The chapter is structured in two parts. In *The problem of class: economic, cultural or discursive (2.1),* I discuss theoretical approaches to class including economic approaches which have tended to dominate class analysis in the twentieth century, cultural approaches in which I introduce Bourdieu's conceptual framework, and approaches that argue class and classed inequality can be seen as discursively constructed. Much of this draws on sociological work. In the second section *The*

problem of classed inequality (2.2) I explore the ways in which classed inequality has been researched within the workplace, highlighting how organisational processes and discourses connect a (classed) individual and (classed) context; showing the value of using Bourdieu's concept of field and capital as a theoretical frame. I also discuss how Bourdieu's concept of habitus (see 1.5.2) can be developed to one of an 'ideal habitus' to better suit a discursive approach and discuss the value of the career construct as a research tool. This section draws on research from both OS and also sociology.

2.1) The problem of class: economic, cultural or discursive

Debates over the question, *what is class?* have a long history within the discipline of sociology, broadly divided into two approaches (Ashley & Empson, 2013; Bottero, 2004); those that view class as economically-determined, distinct from notions of social status (e.g. Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007), and those that see class as culturally contingent, a combination of economic and cultural processes (e.g. Bourdieu, 1984, 1987; Savage, 2015). Underpinning these debates are epistemological questions as to how class is best known i.e. an objective, universally applicable category – a class of itself - or a more subjectively defined identity - a class for itself (Crompton, 2008) with further questions raised as to who knows class best, the classifier or the classed. Indeed a longstanding problem for class analysts has been that ordinary people often do not see class in the same way that sociologists do (Bottero, 2004; Savage et al., 2010)**.** To these debates I draw out a third approach which focuses on class as discursively constructed. This, as I note in Chapter One, is not to diminish material inequalities within society, but to explore how these are made visible or invisible through discourse. In the sections below I discuss these approaches considering the theoretical basis and epistemological assumptions underpinning how class and classed inequality are conceptualised. As noted above much of the literature informing these debates comes from the discipline of sociology, and yet it has relevance to an OS scholar examining class.

2.1.1) Economic approaches to class

Economic approaches view class as a measure of economic power within an unequal system of economic relations. They are rooted in the theories of Karl Marx (Crompton, 2010) and Max Weber (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007) and have dominated class analysis in the UK and US for much of the twentieth century, powered by positivist ambitions to

put class on a firm sociological footing (Lizardo, 2019; Savage, 2010). As such scholars from this sociological perspective, maintain a tight distinction between class as a theoretical, empirically-informed measure of labour market power and everyday notions of status, arguing the former predict life chances whilst the latter do not (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007; Stefánsson, 2014).

Marx and Weber argued that class is a particular outcome of a capitalist system of value and exchange (Crompton, 2008). Marx's seminal theory proposed that economic relations determined social and political ones, and indeed drove history (Cannadine, 2000; Grint & Nixon, 2015). It was through relationship to the means of production, he argued (acknowledging a debt to Adam Smith, (Cannadine, 2000)), that class can be located (Crompton, 2008), and it is through the relationship between the classes that social change can be explained. Thus, Marx identified three primordial classes: the aristocracy who drew rent from their estates; the bourgeoisie who drew profits from their capital; and the working classes who drew wages from their labour (Ashley & Empson, 2013; Cannadine, 2000). Within capitalism, the struggle between the competing interests of the capitalists (i.e. exploitation for profit) and working classes (i.e. not being exploited), would politicise the latter, converting them from a 'class of itself' - which existed only as an analytical category - to a 'class for itself' - a conscious and politically active social identity (Crompton, 2008). The distinction between economic and social forms of differentiation was furthered by Max Weber, who argued that it was class, rather than social status, that primarily determined life chances (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007; Grint & Nixon, 2015) He nuanced this view by arguing that one's market position, and hence income, could also be mediated by the scarcity of and demand for a particular occupational skill (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007; Grint & Nixon, 2015).

The prediction that class would move from an objective 'class of itself' to a conscious 'class for itself' has shaped the focus of class analysis in the UK and US. A particular concern has been to find the one best way to model a class **structure** from which **consciousness** and then **action** could be measured, or S-C-A, as well as social mobility and life chances assessed (Crompton, 2008, 2010). These ambitions were facilitated by the advancement of technology and means to analyse large amounts of data in the 1960s and 1970s (Crompton, 2008). In the US, work was led by Erik Olin Wright, who

measured economic power using Marx's concept of exploitation - determined through a complex operationalising of game theory (Crompton, 2008; Savage et al., 2005). Whilst in the UK, John Goldthorpe and others worked with iterations of Marxian and Weberian concepts to develop an occupational schema measured by ownership of capital (employed, self-employed or employer), and contract type (whether one exchanges labour for a wage or commits a discretionary service to a company, combined with the degree of skill required) (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007; Crompton, 2008). Goldthorpe maintains a tight focus on the economic aspects of class, and his schema forms the basis of the NS-SEC (National Statistics Socio Economic Classification) model used by the UK Office for National Statistics today (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007; Crompton, 2008).

However, there were a number of limitations in the operationalisation of these occupational schemas (Crompton, 2008). First, was the problem of responding to the changing occupational landscape. In the late twentieth century, globalisation, the decline in UK heavy manufacturing, and the development of new technology, has created new occupations that don't fit neatly into pre-existing economic categories (Crompton, 2008); the software employee for example who produces for a wage but also owns the means of production i.e. knowledge (Marks & Baldry, 2009). A second problem was the insistence of these schemes in measuring one occupation per household (Crompton, 2008). This often subsumed the class identity of a wife's to her husband's, an assumption which, whilst defended on economic grounds (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1992) was challenged academically, and also in practice, as increasing numbers of women entered the workplace (Crompton, 2008). Moreover, these schemes lacked explanatory power; the class-conscious proletariat has simply not materialised in the way that Marx predicted (Cannadine, 2000). People do not class themselves the way that sociologists do (Bottero, 2004; Savage et al., 2010) and measuring the economic aspects of class revealed little as to why this was the case (Crompton, 2008).

The value of an economic perspective is also compromised by the fact that in practice, many scholars conflate class with status (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007). The concept of socio-economic status, particularly in the US, is widely used and yet little explicated, finding expression in a plethora of measures (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007); for example, the Duncan Socio Economic Index (Côté, 2011; Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007); the Hollingshead Index of Social Position (Côté, 2011); the MacArthur Scale of Subjective

Social Status (Kraus et al., 2009; e.g. Kraus & Keltner, 2009) or the Nakoe and Treas work prestige scale (Eshelman & Rottinghaus, 2015). These often combine a mixture of occupational status measured by public survey, educational level and income. Additionally researchers also use a pragmatic combination of their own proxy measures to indicate class economic position (see for example Belmi and Laurin, (2016)).

The increasing dis-identification between sociologists' economic measures of class, and people's own subjective class identity, is an ongoing problem for class analysts (Bottero, 2004; Crompton, 2008). Some theorists have argued that class is no longer empirically or practically relevant in late modernity (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001), a shift often called the 'individualistic turn' (Crompton, 2010, p. 20). Most class scholars, perhaps unsurprisingly, dispute this claim (Atkinson, 2016; Crompton, 2008), though it has led to different research foci. Economic proponents of class have simply jettisoned issues of class-consciousness to focus instead on demonstrating and measuring persistent patterns of economic inequality (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007; Stefánsson, 2014). More culturally-focused sociologists have moved beyond measuring class as an explicit category, to seeing it as a more implicit outcome of classed processes, many of these adopting Bourdieu's theoretical lens as explained below (Bottero, 2004). And others have taken a discursive approach examining how class and classed inequality are constructed ideologically (e.g. Lawler, 2018; Tyler, 2015) and also in everyday contexts (e.g. Atkinson, 2010a; Irwin, 2015, 2018). I examine these in Section 2.1.3.

Much of this debate around economic approaches to class is located outside of OS. Although the basic tenets of a Marxian approach do underpin some of the thinking of critical OS scholars, some of whom are focussed on class (e.g. Acker, 2006, 2012) whilst some are more focussed on a general critique of the organisation of work as capital-labour (e.g. Fleming, 2017; Huws, 2014; Standing, 2014). In general, as Acker (e.g. Acker, 2006, 2012) has argued, OS scholars have tended to avoid the language of class. Indeed as Atkinson (2009) has argued, there has been a separation between class analysis and those studying organisational processes, and hence a potential need to draw these closer together.

Economic approaches to class then, whilst theoretically informed, limit what can be known about class and classed inequality. This I would argue is primarily an

epistemological issue as the dominant paradigm within this view has been structuralist (as informed by Marx) and positivist (as informed by the dominant practice in the sociological field, at least in the twentieth century (Crompton, 2008; Savage, 2010)). Whilst valuable for exploring trends and possible correlations, it is limited for considering questions of how inequality is maintained as it diminishes the role of human agency. Indeed it privileges economic issues as drivers of change, over socio-cultural ones, and the researcher's view over that of the researched. I next consider how a 'cultural' approach to class might offer particular value.

2.1.2) Cultural approaches; introducing Bourdieu

Cultural approaches to class emerged as part of a broader 'cultural turn' in the social sciences, and partly in response to the limitations of the economic approach described above (Crompton, 2008). They are perhaps too diverse to be seen as a school of thought (Bottero, 2004) comprising work from the disciplines of sociology and history, and emerging in part as both neo-Marxist (e.g. Thompson, 1963) and post-Marxist (Callewaert, 2006). However they share a view that cultural processes e.g. social relations, family, education, politics are as important as economic ones in shaping class and classed inequality (Bottero, 2004). They can be informed by both qualitative (e.g Charlesworth, 2000) and quantitative methodologies (e.g. Bourdieu, 1984; Savage, 2015), though all acknowledge class as contingent on context.

One of the key theorists associated with a cultural approach is Pierre Bourdieu. Whilst primarily a sociologist, a contemporary and colleague of Foucault, he traversed academic and epistemological boundaries in attempting to make sense of (and find a position within) a post-structuralist world (Callewaert, 2006; Silva & Warde, 2010). He developed a view of the social world as comprising a number of semi-autonomous, competing but homologous fields e.g. the economic field, the cultural field and the field of power (Bourdieu, 1992a). These are governed by their own particular logic which shape the relative positions within them, the type of capital valued (e.g. economic, cultural, social or symbolic – see further below in this section for an account of capital) and thus distinguish them from other fields. The insistence of Marxist scholars to locate class in only one field, the economic one, was thus, Bourdieu argued, part of its failing (Bourdieu, 1992a).

Bourdieu's focus on cultural processes has inspired a great deal of research among a current generation of class analysts within UK sociology (see for example Atkinson, 2016; Reay, 1998; Savage, 2015; Skeggs, 2005; Tyler, 2015). One appeal of Bourdieu's theory is in enabling researchers to detect classed processes at work, where others (those from the 'individualistic turn' described above) argued class did not exist (Atkinson, 2016; Bottero, 2004). A secondary appeal was in the practicability of Bourdieu's conceptual framework to do this analytical work; the trilogy of field, habitus and capital (Bourdieu, 1987; Tyler, 2015; Webb et al., 2008). A field can be conceptualised in two ways: as a broad social space upon which proximal social positions can be identified (Bourdieu, 1987, 1989) and as dynamic spaces of practice, where people and institutions compete for particular positions (Flemmen, 2013). Fields and the positions within them, are governed by a relational logic, such as commercial or non-commercial (Bourdieu & Nice, 1980) or masculine or feminine (Djerf-Pierre, 2007) which distinguishes one field from another, as well as the type of capital valued within (Bourdieu & Nice, 1980). Individuals compete within a field according to their capital, volume and type, and also their habitus. Habitus describes an accumulative set of dispositions and experience, a 'socialized subjectivity' (Grenfell & Hardy, 2007, p.28), drawn primarily from family background. Habitus determines how people see the world, their position within it (including class position), and their likely position-taking or strategy for accumulating capital over their lifetime (Bourdieu, 1984, 1989).

Bourdieu conceptualised capital as the exchange mechanism though which people can acquire a position within a particular field or social space, such as economic (e.g. property, salary) or social (e.g. networks). Cultural capital and symbolic capital are of particular interest to sociologists and OS scholars exploring classed inequality as it is through these, that, often invisible, processes of classing take place (Bottero, 2004). Cultural capital is conceptualised in three forms: institutionalised (educational, knowledge), material (possessions, tastes) and embodied (dress, accent). It may seem a personal affair, one irrelevant to inequality. However, Bourdieu empirically linked cultural tastes and behaviours to socioeconomic position, and thus to processes of class-making in his seminal work, *Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu & Darbel, 1991). Symbolic capital is a reified form of capital given particular value within a field. Described as a 'degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity, consecration, or honour'

(Bourdieu, 1993, p. 7) it is closest to Weber's concept of social status (Ashley & Empson, 2013). The power and privilege inherent in symbolic capital relies on the belief, or misrecognition from others in a field, that it is natural, neutral and fairly achieved, rather than underpinned by inherited capital (Bourdieu & Nice, 1980).

Bourdieu developed and applied his theory of practice to a range of subjects, including an analysis of cultural consumption (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu & Darbel, 1991); education and social mobility (Webb et al., 2008) and also particular cultural fields (Bourdieu, 1993). Whilst he was prolific he didn't actually explore the workplace per se. This has been taken up by the new generation of scholars from both sociology (Atkinson, 2010a; Friedman & Laurison, 2019; Friedman & O'Brien, 2017; Reay, 2004a) and OS (e.g. Ashley & Empson, 2013, 2017; McLeod et al., 2009) which I discuss in section 2.2.2 below. Whilst he explored the processes which contribute to classed inequality, e.g. how those with capital accumulate more capital, Bourdieu avoided contributing to classificatory debates. He argued that 'ready-made' classes (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 3) do not exist in any substantive sense. Instead, and borrowing from the language of physics, he argued that social differences should be understood as relational, contingent upon the logic governing a particular field, the type of capital valued, and the amount of capital possessed (Bourdieu, 1987). Rather than imposing an already existing "principle of vision and division", (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 7) the task of the sociologist was to work inductively, identifying how capital was valued and distributed within a particular field (Bourdieu, 1987).

Bourdieu's work is not without critics. Despite his wish to elevate the role of the individual (i.e. via habitus), his empirical studies have been criticised for being deterministic and reductionist (Bennett et al., 2010; Lahire, 2003). His work on cultural capital and social mobility, for example, has been described as pessimistic, seeing only the reproduction of class inequalities and allowing little scope for social change (Goldthorpe, 2007). And his work examining the correspondence between class and types of cultural capital, *Distinction*, has been criticised for stripping out 'detail' or problematic findings (Lahire, 2003). By focussing on class and culture, he has been criticised for overlooking gendered, ethnic and other differences in cultural activities (Bennett et al., 2010; Prior & Macdonald, 2006) and for proposing a rather simplistic, almost deterministic view of culture, as either high (e.g. opera, theatre) or low (e.g. TV

and popular music). Others have shown that this high-low distinction is perhaps not relevant in different countries such as the US where boundaries around class and culture are more fluid (Lamont, 2010; 2018) or in different times where cultural activities have changed (e.g. the emergence of digital production or consumption) and tastes become more omnivorous (Peterson & Kern, 1996).

Bourdieu's concepts have also been called to account. Often he used them inconsistently or they have proliferated, both under his watch and by others who have used them (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). Some have argued that the power of cultural capital has not been adequately examined (Warde, 2016), although the recent studies discussed below suggest it matters economically (Friedman & Laurison, 2019). Furthermore Bourdieu's concept of habitus has been criticised for being under-theorised (Bennett et al., 2010; Silva, 2016). It carries a great deal of weight, as it is via habitus that a person's actions are determined (Bourdieu, 1984, 1987). And yet Bourdieu did not provide any adequate explanation of how habitus is acquired, apart from a brief nod to psychoanalytic theory, or indeed how or whether it can adapt (Silva, 2016). In later years he abandoned it (Bennett et al., 2010), though some sociologists of social mobility have deployed it as a way to examine the effects of background on choices in education (Bradley, 2018; Gardner et al., 2018). It thus holds value, but potentially needs development (Riach, 2007).

However, the fundamental tenets of Bourdieu's theory are, I argue, still very pertinent for examining class and classed inequality, particularly for OS scholars doing so through the lens of work and career. Indeed, the value of Bourdieu's approach has been advocated by critical diversity scholars (Tatli & Özbilgin, 2012). Organisations or occupations can be conceptualised as fields and hence as dynamic sites of struggle for valued (economic, social, cultural) capital (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008; Everett, 2002). Having more valued capital amounts to power and privilege. Furthermore, an important dimension of this has not received a great deal of empirical attention. Bourdieu conceptualised the field as a site of struggle in which people compete not only for capital, but also for the power to name the capital valued, hence a discursive struggle (Bourdieu, 1992a, 1993; Sayer, 2017). Those who are dominant in this struggle are able to "world-make" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 22), to impose their view of the world as universal and legitimate. In this way certain ways of having and being are misrecognised as

natural and neutral when in fact they are social and arbitrary. For example, the power of a curator to call someone an 'artist' (Grenfell & Hardy, 2007), the power of senior executives to talk of and identify 'talent' (Friedman & Laurison, 2019, p.111), or indeed the power of a sociologist or government official to define class. In this way then Bourdieu's theory can be seen as one articulating a particular relationship between language and power, as mutually implicated (Dick & Nadin, 2011; Riach, 2007; Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

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Bourdieu's theory thus provides a valuable way of examining the processes which contribute to class and classed inequality within a particular social space. His concepts of field and capital hold particular promise for OS scholars, and I consider their use below. In particular the concept of field as one of discursive struggle, not just for the capital valued but for the power to name the capital valued. Bourdieu's concept of the field as struggle also provides a way of examining the processes which might lead to particular versions of class (e.g. sociological or historical) being seen as dominant or legitimate, although it has been less used to do so. In the next section I consider recent sociological approaches which examine how class is constructed through discursive processes.

2.1.3) Discursive approaches

Discursive approaches within sociological class analysis could arguably be described as a sub-set of 'cultural approaches.' And the studies in this section, are not always explicitly described as 'discursive'. However they all illustrate how class is constructed through discursive processes and I draw them out here to consider the epistemological and empirical value of this approach. They focus less on identifying a 'truth' to class and more on illustrating the constructed, contested and hence political dimensions of 'classing'. They thus invite a stepping back, a reflection of how different versions of class (political, academic and everyday) gain prominence and with what effects. As Lizardo (2019) argues class could be seen as a generic category – like space or time – upon which scholars have been able to impose their versions using method or theory to augment such claims. I consider the value of discursive approaches to highlighting how different versions of class are deployed and to what effect.

Discursive approaches highlight how class is used as a way of theorising social structure, as well as ascribing value to that structure. The historian David Cannadine (2000)'s work is uniquely instructive in providing an understanding of class as a structuring discourse. Tracing its use in the UK over the last three centuries, he argues there are three competing versions: a finely graduated hierarchy; a tripartite model with three classes and a dichotomous "them and us" model. These are deployed with different effects. The first version tends to a naturalisation of difference and social inequality, with everyone in their rightful place due to merit, birth, and/or divine ordination. This, Cannadine (2000) argues, has been the dominant political discourse in the UK and particularly so since Thatcher's Premiership (1979-1991). The second version champions the value of a middle class as a moralising break between the often amoral excesses of the lower and upper classes; whilst the third is often deployed as an adversarial model; a sense of those who are right (e.g. the workers) and those who are wrong (e.g. the factory owners). Marx's view of class - or the conflict model of society - fits with this view (Crompton, 2008). These different 'class models' do not mirror a social reality; rather they are used to justify and legitimate particular claims of how society is and how society should be (Cannadine, 2000).

Sociological research also focusses on the way discourses of class are deployed politically. In particular, critical sociologists have shown how class is constructed (or obfuscated) through an individualising, neoliberal ideology. Both Thatcher and the New Labour administration have been charged with perpetuating a 'classless' view of society, in which individuals can successfully get on, as long as they acquire the right entrepreneurial approach (Tyler, 2015). This not only diminishes ideas of class as '*bosses and workers'* (Atkinson, 2010a) but also perpetuates the '*myth of meritocracy'* (Scully & Blake-Beard, 2006), overlooking inherited advantage or disadvantage in favour of the enterprising, future-focussed, risk-orientated and resilient individual (Lawler, 2018; Tyler, 2015). Researchers from both sociology and OS have examined how these individualising and enterprising discourses shape policies addressing all stages of working-life from parenting and raising the next generation of 'workers' (Gillies, 2005; Lawler, 2018); to being employable (Allen et al., 2013; Ingram & Allen, 2018), and to constructing a good retirement (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2008). These studies thus provide a more critical insight into the 'individual' turn within class analysis, illustrating its ideological side. Indeed some scholars (e.g. Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2001;

Tyler, 2015) argue that the individualising thesis is a concerted attempt to legitimise the inequalities wrought by neoliberalism and financial capitalism.

Such individualising discourses have effects for how people are classed. Within a discursive landscape where success and social mobility is a personal responsibility, those who don't fare well are stigmatised (Tyler, 2015). Those at the bottom of the social hierarchy, or those outside, have been constructed as fair game to a British media in programmes such as *Benefits Street* (Tyler, 2015) and *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* (Belfiore, 2020), and in the media in general (Jones, 2011). This not surprisingly has effects for how people class themselves. Sociologists have found an increasing dis-identification by participants with the class identities on offer. Working class participants in Skeggs (2005) study resisted their hostile classing by others through re-valorising their own values of collectivism and spontaneity. And Shildrick and MacDonald (2013) found that people living in poverty, resisted the language of poverty, and distanced themselves from a work-shy, and not managing "poor", by constructing a self as unremarkable and proud to be coping. Conversely, Jarness and Friedman (2017) argued that people with higher incomes were keen to construct themselves through a discourse of ordinariness. Such research shows that people are acutely attuned to the political effects of classing (Bottero, 2004; Savage, 2015).

However, it may not only be political discourses that have effects. Increasingly sociologists have explored the power of and effects of academic discourses on the research process. Payne and Grew (2005) argue that some of the difficulty participants have talking about class may be due to it being proposed as an abstract concept rather than a way they can make sense of their own lives. Indeed Irwin (2015) suggests that people may refuse the class identities imposed on them, not through a process of dis-identification, but because these are **not** the processes they use to class themselves. Savage (2005) also highlights the danger of rigidly sticking to a particular model of class, and hence missing the depth and richness by which participants might understood their world.

There has thus been a research trend to take a step back from imposing a 'discourse' of class to exploring how people construct class in the everyday. Sociologists have found that class, as a structuring device is often used spontaneously by people to make sense

of their position in a social space and that personal frames of reference are used to do so (e.g. family, autobiography) (Harrits & Pedersen, 2018; Irwin, 2018; van Eijk, 2013). They have also found that when constructed as an economic category class is also seen to be unfair (Harrits & Pedersen, 2018; Irwin, 2018; van Eijk, 2013). In the main, research examining everyday discourses of class have been mostly concerned to demonstrate that class **is** relevant to people and hence refute the claim that class is dead, rather than to critically examine how class is constructed. A notable exception is van Eijk (2013)'s study that found that whilst some participants (the most educated) claimed economic versions of class to be unfair, still used a more implicit discourse of individualised responsibility as a way to legitimate social hierarchies. Savage's (2007a) study examining how everyday constructions of class have changed is also useful. Using secondary data from the Mass Observation archives from 1948 and 1990, he detects a shift from a discourse of class inscribed as birth-right (to which an individual had little choice but to accept) to a more individually constructed, mobile and reflexive identity. Further, he notes how people in 1990 are keen to show proficiency of sociological discourses of class, illustrating perhaps the power of this field (sociology) to speak of class.

Whilst discursive approaches have shown how class is constructed differently in different contexts, few studies have yet done so within the workplace, arguably an important context. Indeed, as I show below in 2.2.1, organisations and occupations are a nexus between classing discourses from within and without. Most of the focus within OS thus far has been on examining the discourses which shape organisational processes and hence implicitly contribute to an inequality which may be described as classed i.e. the legitimising and invisible effects of occupational hierarchies (Acker, 2006); the imposition of a psychological construct which exploits workers (Dick & Nadin, 2011) or the myth of meritocracy (Amis et al., 2019; Scully & Blake-Beard, 2006). A great deal of work has also examined the discourses by which other forms of inequality are constructed such as age (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2008; Riach, 2007; Whiting, 2012), gender (Holvino, 2008) and ethnicity (Zanoni et al., 2017). There has as yet been little empirical examination of how class is constructed within a workplace, although Zanoni (2011)'s study exploring how a discourse of 'lean productivity' classes workers is a valuable start (I explore this in 2.2.1 below).

Summary

In this section I have outlined theoretical and epistemological approaches to class. I have highlighted how class analysis has been dominated by economic approaches which maintain a strict analytical focus on class as a measurable position within the labour market. Cultural approaches have challenged the primacy of economic ones pointing to the importance of context and cultural processes in constructing class. I introduce the theoretical approach of Bourdieu and consider the value of his concepts, particularly field and capital, in providing a unique inroad for OS scholars in examining class and classed inequality. I then consider how discursive approaches have provided a more critical framing of class.

I propose that combining Bourdieu's theory with a discursive approach offers particular value to an examination of class and classed inequality in the workplace. It provides an opportunity to examine how the struggles within and between occupational fields shape discourses of value and hence class and classed inequality. However, in order to craft this lens, it is important to explore more fully how classed inequality has been researched within the workplace and also consider how Bourdieu's theory and discourse analysis have been used to do so.

2.2) The problem of classed inequality

Whilst the section above focussed on how class is conceptualised this section focuses on how classed inequality has been researched in the workplace. The discussion thus draws on research primarily from the field of OS though also builds on contributions from sociologists taking a critical view of social mobility. Of course, not all scholars necessarily see class differences as problematic. Some economists argue that a division of labour is a natural and healthy outcome of competition in a capitalist economy (Hayek, 2003). Others take a more critical approach (Acker, 2006; Tyler, 2015), and indeed Marxian approaches argue that capitalism is fundamentally driven by a logic of exploitation. The question is thus understanding the processes by which societal divisions are reproduced, and whether this can be described as unfair or indeed classed.

Fundamental to this has been the balance between structure and agency; as in how individuals reproduce the structures that then constrain them. Indeed, this question has

been the concern of social theorists from the time of Durkheim and Weber and has arguably generated the theses of a generation of post-structural scholars, such as Foucault and Bourdieu (Callewaert, 2006; Grint & Nixon, 2015). It is not the purpose of this thesis to solve these issues. Rather I show how OS scholars provide a useful lens, by exploring the organisation or occupation as sites which reflect and reproduce classed inequality practically and discursively. I then explore how Bourdieu's concepts of field and capital provide a valuable theoretical frame for an exploration of these processes at an occupational level. I discuss the limitations of habitus (as discussed briefly in 2.1.2 above), propose the development of the 'ideal habitus' as a way of thinking about this as a discursive construct and consider how the career construct provides a valuable tool to examine classed processes.

2.2.1) Classed inequality within the workplace

Organisations and occupations act as gatekeepers to the economic and symbolic rewards valued in society (Crompton, 2008, 2010). And, as argued above, they can be seen as a nexus between the individual (and hence classing discourses from without) and context (and hence classing discourses from within). They are thus implicated in both reinforcing and reproducing classed inequality. Below I consider how this has been thus far examined by OS scholars.

Mainstream psychological approaches within OS have begun to explore the classed individual at work. These consider how a person's attitudes to work, as derived from their classed background, might contribute to inequality. Côté (2011) for example, speculates that lower-class individuals (which he describes as those from poorer backgrounds) tend to develop a greater sense of purity and morality, greater obedience, have stronger social networks and take less risks than their higher-class colleagues, which disadvantages them in the workplace. These ideas are given some empirical weight by variable-driven studies from the US and UK showing how lower social classes (measured using a variety of indicators including the Macarthur Scale of Subjective Social Status, mentioned in 2.1.1 above) engage more fully with strangers (Kraus & Keltner, 2009); have a higher tendency to use context, rather than disposition to frame attributions, have a lower sense of personal control (Kraus et al., 2009, 2011); and are more likely to display pro-social and helpful behaviour ((Piff et al., 2010).

Furthermore lower class individuals may be less interested in work as a source of personal satisfaction (Blustein et al., 2002), have a disinclination to achieve power for the sake of it (Belmi & Laurin, 2016); and if they do achieve power in the form of becoming a CEO, are more likely to be risk-averse (Kish-Gephart & Tochman Campbell, 2015).

Whilst these studies provide a valuable focus on the psychology of class at work, there is a lack of focus on context. There is an assumption rather than an empirical exploration of what is entailed to 'get on' at work. And an assumption that classed inequality can be explained solely at the level of the individual (and hence seen as a deficit of the person) rather than with reference to the dynamics of the workplace. Furthermore much of this research has been operationalised without reference to the theoretical debates on class outlined in 2.1. As a result the way class is conceptualised is inconsistent between and within studies (e.g. Belmi & Laurin (2016) used a range of different measures across four studies, including household income, perceived childhood rank, subjective status, education and parents education. Their results thus may simply indicate some form of correlation between these variables, which whilst they imply, do not necessarily prove, a classed psychology).

At the other end of the agency-structure spectrum, Marxian approaches within OS and sociology locate classed inequality within the logic of capitalism. This demands companies seek ever greater profit by maximising a surplus value of labour from workers (Grint & Nixon, 2015; Huws, 2014; Savage et al., 2005), and by developing technologies to save production costs. This leads to ever greater exploitation and alienation of the worker (Grint & Nixon, 2015; Huws, 2014; Standing, 2014). Classed inequality is thus an inevitable outcome of the capitalist work relationship and can only be redressed through a redistribution of profits, revolutionary or otherwise (Fraser, 1995). Indeed, scholars have shown how the current neoliberal incarnation of capitalism, has led to greater precarity for many workers; increasing short-term working and projectification (Huws, 2014; Standing, 2014); a shift to taking on the responsibility of the job market and investing in one's own human capital (Fleming, 2017) and hence a focus on developing appropriate skills such as resilience and enterprise (Mäkinen, 2014). Indeed, class and work have been shaped by the same individualising discourses (Tyler, 2015).

A focus only on a classed individual or an economically determined context however can limit our understanding of how classed inequality is reproduced within the workplace (Eikhof, 2017). A Marxian approach under-theorises the agency of those subject to power, and fails to explain how people make sense of and act upon their world (Crompton, 2008; Dick, 2008). Indeed not all organisations operate according to an explicit economic logic, even if they exist within a broader capitalist economy. Cultural organisations for example also espouse a logic of creative endeavour or *arts for arts sake* (Belfiore, 2020; Morgan & Nelligan, 2015), one Bourdieu argued resists an economic logic (Bourdieu, 1993). And as Acker (2006) argues, the power implicated in 'organising' makes organisations 'regimes of inequality' regardless of what logic they follow. Like other scholars examining inequality in the workplace, she argues that organisations are sites of economic AND cultural power shaped by intersecting inequalities of class, gender and race (Acker, 2006; Holvino, 2008; Sommerlad, 2011). From this lens it is thus important to pay attention to the workplace itself – at an organisational and occupational level - and examine the processes (i.e. what organisations do) and discourses (i.e. what underpins and legitimates these processes) that reflect and reproduce classed structures (i.e. who gets what and who goes where) (Acker, 2006, 2012).

Organisations enact a number of practices which potentially contribute to classed inequality. Acker (2006) identifies several processes including job evaluation processes, recruitment, wage-setting, supervisory relations and interactions between workers. She examined a job evaluation scheme where she noted that certain work (that higher up the hierarchy) is described more clearly and is more likely to take credit for the work of others (those lower down the hierarchy), a process she described as both classed and gendered (Acker 1990, 2006). She also identifies several 'themes' by which inequality is re-produced and maintained within the workplace – the level of visibility and legitimacy of the inequality as well as the systems of control and compliance which hold workers in place. Eikhof (2017) suggests that a decision-making framework would help scholars examine such processes across a broader occupational context (her focus is the creative field). She suggests three dimensions to analysing decisions; a) the points at which decisions are made (e.g. job interviews); b) workers as objects of decisions

making, and the c) decision-makers themselves and the context within which they decide.

These processes of decision-making within (and across) organisations are shaped by varying assumptions and discourses of class. This may be class signalled at an everyday, embodied level. In the US, Rivera (2012) has examined how recruitment decisions in elite professional service firms are made according to cultural fit between the candidate and the recruiter. These rest on a reading of class as leisure interests, dress and self-presentation. Gray & Kish-Gephart (2013) speculate on how these everyday assumptions of class (e.g. as accent or dress) can create anxiety and hence necessitate "class work" when encountered in the workplace e.g. creating spatial segregation; perpetuating myths and/or distorting privilege. Cognitive psychological studies can contribute an understanding of how such discourses of class are widely shared. The effect of classed sartorial symbols on interactions was tested by Kraus & Mendes (2014) who showed that upper-class dress (i.e. business-suits) induced dominance over others, measured socially (through a negotiation outcome) and physiologically. In this way then organisational processes may reinforce classed differences.

Organisations also contribute to and enact their own assumptions of class, particularly those constructed through occupational hierarchies. Indeed, as Acker (1990, 2006) argues, hierarchies reinforce the way certain jobs are valued. Assumptions based on these hierarchies can reinforce further inequality, as those in lower positions are often overlooked or rendered invisible. Berrey (2014) found that diversity schemes in a particular organisation were offered only at a certain level, for senior women and people of colour, overlooking those in less senior positions. OS researchers have also explored how women in roles lower down a hierarchy such as cleaning in the NHS or the City, feel obscured by their job, discriminated against, or disrespected by colleagues in more prominent roles, (Hebson, 2009; Moore, 2009; Wills, 2008). Organisational and occupational hierarchies thus have classed effects in and of themselves.

At a broader level, organisations constitute and are constituted by discourses which also have classing effects. Hence they are sites shaped by economic discourses; such as a 'discourse of efficiency' or of 'positive globalisation' (Amis et al., 2019) These economic discourses can valorise particular ways of working and have a classing effect

as is the case in Zanoni's (2011) study. She shows how a discourse of 'lean productivity' (and hence a discourse of efficiency of sorts) was deployed as a master matrix by employees within a car company in Belgium by which workers were classed as productive (male/able bodied) or not productive (women/disabled). Organisations and occupations are also shaped by cultural discourses which naturalise and valorise cultural credentials. Sommerlad (2011) argues that the use of academic qualifications from particular universities as a proxy for quality in the UK legal profession, obscures the classed, gendered and raced basis of accessing these. It thus leads to and legitimises classed, gendered and raced hierarchies in the legal field. Alexander et al. (2017) show how discourses of widening access (WA) in medical schools in the UK, also maintain strong notions of academic excellence hence preserving hierarchies of inequality, whilst in Canada the emphasis for WA was on improving patient care. These studies show how organisations act as 'processing sites' for wider societal discourses with particular effects for generating, maintaining and legitimating classed inequality.

Organisations can also be shaped by classing discourses which emanate (or at least gain credibility) from the field of OS itself. Dick and Nadin (2011) use Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence to show how the OS concept of the psychological contract can be used to obscure the classed and exploitative basis of the employer-employee relationship. In their study of care work they show how employers and supervisors in high status roles are able to participate in and deploy the ideas underpinning the psychological contract; i.e. commitment and work-based meaning and do so to demonstrate their own status as a good employer. The discourse of the psychological contract however exploits other groups i.e. employees in low status roles who do not have the linguistic capital to speak in this way viewing work along more Marxist, transactional lines i.e. '*a fair day's work for a fair day's pay'* (Dick & Nadin, 2011, p. 301).

Indeed, it is valuable to examine how organisations operate and make decisions in relation to other fields and other organisations. As DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) institutional theory proposes - borrowing from Bourdieu's dynamic and relational concept of field - organisations are not always driven to be different but to be the same (the value of field is discussed in 2.2.2 next). Hence occupational (and academic) fields may be shaped by a shared understanding of what makes them different to other fields,

as well as similar to each other (Symon et al., 2018). In the next section I explore how Bourdieu's concepts of field and capital can be used to explore these processes. Whilst in section 2.2.3, I explore how ways of being are also discursively constructed through the concept of the ideal worker.

The discussion above argues that organisations and occupational fields are important sites within which to examine classed inequality. They are gatekeepers to economic and symbolic rewards in society and hence the processes by which decisions are made are important to examine (Crompton, 2008). More importantly I argue that the discourses which underpin and legitimate these processes are important to examine. I turn next to consider the value of Bourdieu's conceptual framework in doing so.

2.2.2) Bourdieu's concepts of field and capital

Bourdieu's conceptual framework provides a valuable approach to explore classed inequality within a work setting. It shifts the lens to a broader space than an organisational one (for example an occupation or an academic field) and is a dynamic and relational theory. It thus connects the struggle of the 'classed' individual with the struggles of a 'classed' context. Classed inequality is conceptualised not only as certain people having more capital, but the ways in which this capital comes to be valued and seen as legitimate, natural and universally accessible. Bourdieu's approach can thus be seen as a thesis of language and power (Dick & Nadin, 2011; Harrington et al., 2015; Riach, 2007).

The concept of field is particularly helpful to the OS scholar. This provides a unique way of understanding an occupation defined not by function or by its population, but as a dynamic set of relationships held in place through a struggle over particular stakes (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008). Bourdieu likened the struggle to a game in which both institutions and individuals can be seen as players (Bourdieu, 1987, 1993). At the institutional level these stakes may be generating income by securing prestigious clients (Ashley & Empson, 2013; Friedman & Laurison, 2019); finding the next best artist (Grenfell & Hardy, 2007) or winning the FA Cup (Webb et al., 2008). At the individual level these stakes may be securing a senior partner role in a law firm; making an artistic name for oneself or playing for a Champions League. It is the playing of the game, the

acceptance of the stakes as valuable, that thus perpetuate their value in the field and also constructs the fields 'logic', maintaining it as distinct from other fields (Bourdieu, 1989, 1993).

The relational and dynamic nature of the field is an important dimension of Bourdieu's theory (Flemmen, 2013; Flemmen et al., 2018; Webb et al., 2008). The field is shaped by its struggles within, which Bourdieu described as between dominant and dominated positions. The dominant have most capital and also the symbolic power from which to name the capital that is valued. These often belong to a sub-field, a field of power in which an intense 'struggle' to secure symbolic power can take place (Ashley & Empson, 2017; Bourdieu, 1987, 1993; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Friedman & Laurison, 2019). The dominated – or newcomers to the field - can either play by the rules or try and change them. The former was the case in Ashley and Empson's (2017) study which found that HR managers in newer professional service firms felt they had little choice but to compete for candidates and clients on the same rules decided by the more elite firms. These elite firms operated in a 'field of power', delineated according to capital but across occupations (e.g. law and consultancy). This thus reproduces an increasingly narrow pool of candidates with a particular type of embodied (e.g. accent, dress code) and institutional (e.g. Oxbridge education) cultural capital (Ashley & Empson, 2017). The latter position i.e. that of changing the rules, is exemplified in the field of artistic practice by the *Young British Artists* who challenged the discourse of *arts for arts sake* and raised questions of what art is for (Grenfell & Hardy, 2007).

Dynamic struggle is also between fields (Dick, 2008). These too are shaped by power, as some fields are more dominant than others. The relationship between government and culture for example where the latter has been forced to construct their value according to a dominant economic discourse (Belfiore, 2020). Fields also compete with other fields. This 'struggle' can be seen in the way new types of technical expertise e.g. engineering, architecture, IT – challenged the dominance of the implicit codes of the traditional professions – law, medicine and finance (Friedman & Laurison, 2019; Savage, 2010). And, competition between fields also underpins the increasing trend towards credentialization of work (Webb et al., 2008), as newer occupational fields such as PR or advertising (Edwards, 2014; Evetts, 2003; McLeod et al., 2009) for example pursue their own project of professionalisation (Larson, 2017).

The dynamic nature of a field, is Friedman and Savage (2018) argue, part of the strength of Bourdieu's theory. It shows how a field can change, yet still perpetuate similar forms of inequality. Hence the increasing numbers of people attending higher education in the UK (Abrahams, 2017; Allen et al., 2013) has not led to increasing social mobility in the UK. Rather it leads to a shifting of the goalposts by the 'dominant' so that elite occupations become ever more out of reach (Sommerlad, 2011). This is classed, raced and gendered. In journalism for example, the increase in women entering the workplace has led to an increased gendering of work, between news (more serious, prestigious and male) and magazine journalism (less important and female) for example (Djerf-Pierre, 2007). Indeed, as Friedman and Laurison, (2019) argue, the hierarchies within a field matter and this is often overlooked by traditional social mobility research.

The struggles within and between fields shape the capital that is valued within them. A number of studies from sociology and OS have shown that the way cultural capital is valued, is the outcome of more implicit and hence classed practices. The confidence to share cultural references in senior meetings (Friedman & Laurison, 2019); having the 'right' accent (Ashley & Empson, 2013; Friedman & O'Brien, 2017; Randle et al., 2015); be seen to have the right 'polish' to build rapport with clients (Ashley & Empson, 2013; Friedman & Laurison, 2019), for example, are all valued as ways to get on within the workplace. Indeed, Friedman and Laurison (2019) show that having the right cultural capital can quite literally pay. It can propel individuals into work that is more valuable economically and symbolically. Whilst those without, encounter a class ceiling which limits access and slows their progress (Friedman et al., 2015; Friedman & Laurison, 2019).

Discursive processes are thus important to this. It is through discourse that capital is both seen to be valuable and is legitimated as fair. Friedman & Laurison (2019) for example note how senior partners use the discourses of 'talent' and 'polish' to justify their recruitment decisions. Ingram and Allen (2018) examine how the ideal candidate is constructed in the graduate recruitment literature of Google and PwC (an accountancy firm). They show how language such as '*googliness*' and '*shine*' are constructed as seemingly neutral ways to stand out and yet, on closer inspection, draw on forms of socially structured capital which is effectively classed. For example, *googliness* is

demonstrated by ‘like-minded-ness’ motivation and go-getting-ness, which belies having the economic capital to take on an internship or the family support to prepare for the job market. The language thus performs an act of ‘social magic’ (Bourdieu, 1989) turning something that is social into something that appears natural (Ingram & Allen, 2018).

The concept of field as a site of struggle is also important in considering how discourses come to be prominent. Özbilgin & Tatli (2011) for example mapped the field of diversity and equality practice in the UK looking at those who had a stake in both defining and implementing policies including trade unions, equality bodies, professional associations, and employers. They argue that the field is constructed through a struggle between individualism and collectivism, versus voluntarism and regulation. The field is increasingly dominated by employers from the private sector and has shifted towards discourses which favour their interests i.e. individualism and voluntarism. In the field of class research, Savage (2010) looks at how sociologists in the mid-twentieth century used the power of statistical method to claim authority to speak on class, wresting this away from a more historical and literary approach. The dominant discourse of class thus becomes a measurable category determined by occupation.

The discussion above shows how field and capital are useful theoretical tools to examine how certain ways of having (e.g. capital) are valued over others. Critical to this is understanding the field as a site of struggle, between fields and also within. And also critical to this is understanding this as a discursive struggle between being able to name the capital that is valued and legitimating it as such i.e. discursive power. Furthermore, the concept of struggle provides a way of understanding how certain discourses become prominent e.g. of diversity or of class. However, the workplace or occupation as a site of discursive struggle has received very little empirical attention within OS, at least when it comes to examining class and classed inequality. This is thus the focus of this thesis to explore how a particular occupational field is constructed and what this tells us about classed inequality and class. Before considering the occupation of UK museums (which I look at in the next Chapter) I first consider the value of Bourdieu’s concept of habitus and also the construct of career.

2.2.3) From habitus to an 'ideal' habitus

Whilst Bourdieu's concepts of field and capital offers theoretical value, particularly from a discursive lens, the concept of habitus (as briefly discussed in 2.1.2) is more problematic. I consider here the value of habitus and look to the literature from critical OS scholars, borrowing the concept of the ideal worker e.g. (Acker, 1990; Williams, 2001) **to** develop the concept of the 'ideal habitus'.

The value of habitus has been questioned such that some scholars, and even Bourdieu himself, have abandoned it (Bennett et al., 2010). Bourdieu (1977, 1987)) developed it to explain why processes of inequality are reproduced through human behaviour. Hence it describes an internalised subjectivity acquired from primary socialisation, a sense of place and of possibility from which people negotiate the world. Whilst he based it on empirical work (including that of other researchers such as Willis's (1977) study, *Learning to Labour*, which explored how working-class boys learn how to be working class men (cited in Bourdieu & Waquant, 1992)) it has been criticised for being under-theorised (Bennett et al., 2010; Silva, 2016). Some suggest his thoughts were akin to a Freudian concept of pre-conscious socialisation, and it is in this that habitus retains its explanatory power (Gardner et al., 2018; Silva, 2016). However, by being valuable as a method of explaining social reproduction, it then has limited ability to explain how people might adapt to different contexts over time. It privileges the pre-conscious as a mechanism for driving human activity, hence limiting attempts to explain human agency (Coupland, 2015; Gardner et al., 2018; Silva, 2016)**.**

However, despite these limitations sociologists and OS scholars have found a way of working with habitus. Some scholars take a practical view, seeing it as more about process than content; and at its simplest a way to account for differences in outlook shaped by where and how one grew up (Lawler, 2018). Hence, studies exploring education have shown how the habitus of parents and students, in the form of ambition, confidence to challenge authority, knowing how to maximise capital, (Bradley, 2018; Reay, 2004b) shape a person's likely success. Others have re-worked it to show how it can account for change over time, pointing to Bourdieu's view that habitus was mainly a constraining rather than a determining influence and that people could adapt, and change to new experiences (Friedman & Savage, 2018; Riach, 2007; Silva, 2016).

A less explored dimension is in examining the fit between a person and context, or why habitus might be a problem in the first place. This entails shifting the focus of habitus away from a classed individual, to the classed context. The concept of an 'organisational' or shared habitus is talked about within some studies, where particular ways of being are constructed (Harrington et al., 2015; Randle et al., 2015). Riach and Cutcher (2014) explore how a masculine, youthful, fitness habitus is written into the bodies of city bankers, but also circulated discursively. Ingram and Allen (2018) discuss institutional habitus in their study above, showing how recruitment literature conveys a 'fit' with a particular company's brand and culture. And Bourdieu himself talked about how certain roles come to embody a particular way of being through the repeated performance of them by people with that way of being. The starving but genius artist in the garret for example; a habitus that could be seen as the luxury of those who can afford to appear starving (Bourdieu, 1993).

A useful way of thinking about habitus is to borrow from the concept of the 'ideal worker' norm (Acker, 1990; Williams, 2001). This was developed to critically examine how working practices in the late 20th and 21st centuries, are structured around the concept of a 'disembodied and universal' ideal worker (Acker, 1990) – able and willing to put work and career above all else. It has been primarily used to highlight how working practices are gendered (e.g. Adkins, 2019; Davies & Frink, 2014; and Williams, 2001) and increasingly blur the boundaries of home and work (e.g. Dumas & Sanchez-Burks, 2015). Though the concept has also been used to critique normative assumptions of ablism (Foster & Wass, 2013), race (Neely, 2020) and mental health (Scholz & Ingold, 2020). The concept also invokes class as in the ideal worker is white, male and middle class (Davies and Frisk; Neely, 2020). And is classing, as in it reflects cultural norms about the division of labour e.g. upper class people become executives; lower class people serve others (Acker, 1990, 2006; Neely, 2020).

The concept of the ideal worker is also implicated with broader changes in the organising of work and discourses of career (Davies & Frink, 2014). The ideal worker concept was developed during a post Fordist era in which people (mostly men) pursued an organisational and hierarchical career and hence required the ability to develop networks and profile within an organisation (Fineman, 2011). In the new economy, it aligns with neoliberal expectations to develop a career across organisations (Gunz et al.,

2011; Neely, 2020; Sommerlad, 2011). This demands a particular subjectivity – a 'brand me' (Conor et al., 2015; Neely, 2020), in which workers are required to market themselves, demonstrate passion, take risks and develop career-enhancing networks. Critical research in both sociology and OS has examined how this has become increasingly 'psychologised'. Individuals are increasingly called upon to adopt certain personal qualities to adapt to a competitive and precarious marketplace such as being resilient, strategic, flexible and enterprising (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2008; Allen et al., 2013; Dick & Nadin, 2011; Gillies, 2005; Lawler, 2018).

The focus on the 'ideal neoliberal worker' has been shown to have clear implications for class. Lawler (2018) argues that it upholds middle-class approaches to work and study, which are premised on having the resources to be able and want to get on. Those who get ahead in the workplace, are those who are willing and able to work for free (Brook et al., 2019; Ingram & Allen, 2018; Taylor & O'Brien, 2017) plan ahead, go the extra mile, and demonstrate good citizenship behaviours (Bradley, 2018), all of which implicates having the resources to do so. The ideal neoliberal worker could thus be seen as a construction that overlooks classed advantages. Indeed Ingram and Allen (2018) show how the sourcing of work placements by undergraduates in the creative industries was constructed as a misrecognised form of individualised resourceful-ness rather than helped along by access to a range of resources (e.g. family connections, money). The concept of the ideal worker in the neoliberal economy thus invokes particular ways of being, which are both classed and obscuring of class.

Borrowing from the concept of the ideal worker thus provides a way to examine an 'ideal habitus'. To focus on the normative expectations of particular ways of being which are in effect underpinned by ways of having (capital) and can therefore have classed effects. Focussing on habitus as a property of context rather than the individual, re-articulates its value. It enables us to explore how ways of being might lead to classed inequality without having to examine (and make assumptions about) the psychological and pre-conscious functioning of different individuals. It also allows us to use the construct discursively. I next consider how this can be done using the construct of career.

2.2.4) Using career as a research tool

The construct of career provides a valuable tool to examine classed processes within a field. Whilst field describes the way an occupation is constructed and hierarchised, career provides the script by which individuals get in and get on. To use Bourdieu's metaphor, the field is the space on which individuals play whilst career describes the rules of the game and the strategies by which players play (Bourdieu, 1987, 1993). As we have seen above, these rules include ways of being (an ideal habitus) and ways of having (accumulating valued capital). I consider here how examining the discursive construction of career within an occupation is an important research focus.

As with class, a career is not an essentialised, universal construct. As noted above in 2.2.3, the broader, societal organisation of work shapes how individuals negotiate their pathway. Hence in the current climate in the UK, it is argued that a career is less shaped by one organisation and more by generic abilities required to negotiate the neoliberal marketplace (e.g. as discussed in 2.2.3 above). Scholars have examined how this 'individualised' career subjectivity can be seen as classed, benefitting a middle class subject likely to be future-focussed, proactive and willing to 'sell' themselves. Morgan and Nelligan (2015) show how this subjectivity conflicts with the traditions of community and long apprenticeships practised by working-class men in the crafts sector. And Abrahams (2017) shows how working class students were less willing to use 'networks' than middle class students, seeing it as less honourable.

Career discourses are also mutually implicated with the construction of a field. OS scholars have increasingly used the career narrative as a way to explore how context shapes both career and identity (Blustein et al., 2004; Cohen et al., 2004). Hence, Taylor and Littleton (2011) argue that the 'creative' career contributes to an unconventional subjectivity, distinct from the conventions of a linear staged career. And Duberley, Cohen and Mallon, (2006) show how scientists construct their career not just along organizational lines but according to the scripts of the impassioned scientist; the strategic opportunist; and the balance seeker. The dynamic nature of a career is also reinforced by and reinforcing of, the practices of field. Hence in TV production for example, the practice of creating project teams at short notice legitimates the use of well-networked individuals rather than a more transparent recruitment process (Friedman & Laurison, 2019; Randle et al., 2015). And in acting the career path is

shaped by the tradition of typecasting. This is difficult for the individual actor to resist unless they have a reserve of economic capital, and/or can leverage themselves into a position of writing the roles (Friedman & O'Brien, 2017). In this way then the career and field are reinforcing of each other.

Looking at class and classed inequality through the lens of career also provides a focus on time. Friedman and Laurison (2019) argue that much social mobility research for example tends to focus on access and does not consider the way class might shape a career over time. Or indeed how time itself may be considered classed. Friedman & Savage, (2018) propose that Henri Bergson's concept of time as force or duration may be useful for understanding how careers might be classed. Here, having capital earlier in life can be seen as a force, a way of propelling a person further along a trajectory. Indeed, a notable feature of Friedman and Laurison's (2019) research is that whilst people from a working-class background may achieve upward mobility, their trajectory is often slower.

The career discourse thus provides a way to explore classed inequality and connect a (classed) individual with a (classed) work context, over time. The career discourse also has a more fundamental classing effect. Indeed, the notion of having a career is used by Goldthorpe in constructing class, thus reinforcing their mutual implication. Within the NS-SEC he distinguishes between those roles that have greater "earning stability and prospects and promotional opportunities", using this to put roles in different classed categories (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007, p. 4). Thus, a job with prospects or career, is used as a classing device (Friedman & Savage, 2018). Indeed, despite the efforts of career scholars to construct a neutral and universally applicable definition of career (e.g. "the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time" (Arthur, Hall, and Lawrence 1989, p. 8)) in everyday discourse, career has been seen as classed, i.e. that middle-class people have careers and working-class people have jobs (Thomas, 1989).

The construct of career clearly underpins the discourse of social mobility. Mainstream social mobility research tends to assume the career as a linear trajectory. Measures of social mobility compare class of destination (as measured by current occupation) compared to class of origin (as measured by parents occupation) with little critical examination of what happens in between (Friedman & Savage, 2018). Sociologists

critically examining social mobility have taken issue with the progressive narrative of career. Hence Miles, Savage, and Bühlmann (2011) propose that the linear narrative is a dominant discourse and has cultural power in shaping how people make sense of their working life. In their study exploring men's narratives, they suggest it was either used to personalise successful accounts or resisted by those whose trajectory has been static or downward. Reay (2018) explores the aspirations of young, working class BME students in East London. She suggests their ambition is mediated by a more generational narrative in the shape of wanting to restore pre-immigrant status, or repair for family wrongs. She also describes her own career as misdirected, and the fact that her class and gender made her feel unable to have an academic career, until later in life.

Research has also begun taking a critical stance to the implicit positivity of career and social mobility. OS scholars have shown how the disciplining effects of career (Grey, 1994) have been under-examined, arguing that this obscures the dark side of career as a way of maintaining power structures and inequalities (Vardi & Vardi, 2019). And sociologists have questioned the value of social mobility. Research shows that upward mobility is often experienced as disruptive, creating a habitus clivé - a sense of dislocation, of not being one class or another (Friedman & Savage, 2018; Reay, 2018). This has caused some sociologists (e.g. Reay, 2018) to challenge the value of social mobility as a solution to classed inequality. It takes people away from a collective identity, within which they grew up, to an individualised identity, by which they may never feel quite good enough (Reay, 2018).

The above discussion shows that there is more than one version of career. Scholars from OS and sociology have provided a critical focus on career and social mobility respectively. Both have critically re-examined how a career is constructed, the way career reinforces the dynamics of a field and the effects of this for classed inequality, and indeed for class. Understanding how a career is constructed thus holds promise for the researcher of class and classed inequality. And hence forms the basis of the research question for this thesis, along with the construction of field. Combined, field and career provide a powerful way to examine how an occupational sector is discursively constructed and consider how class and classed inequality are thus constructed in relation to this.

2.3) Conclusion

The above discussion has shown how class and classed inequality are constructed and have been researched within the sociological and OS literature. In *The problem of class (*2.1), I have shown how different versions of class compete within scholarly contexts. These debates have mostly taken place within the discipline of sociology, though also history (e.g. Cannadine, 2000; Thompson, 1963) and have relevance for the OS scholar. The economic view of class has dominated class analysis for much of the twentieth century, but it's privileging of economic over cultural processes meant it was unable to account for social change or explain the disconnect between class as an objective category or class as subjective identity. The cultural view, and in particular Bourdieu's theoretical framework, contributes a broader view of class and classed inequality, aiming to connect economic and cultural processes. Bourdieu argued that class and classed inequality come about through struggle to both acquire valued capital and to name the capital valued within a particular field. Bourdieu's approach has thus enjoyed a renaissance in British sociology (Atkinson, 2009), been advocated by OS scholars (e.g. Tatli & Özbilgin, 2012) and, I argue, provides a useful theoretical framing to a discursive approach. Discursive approaches have focused on how different versions of class are constructed and deployed at a political, academic and everyday level. However, few studies have as yet examined how class is discursively constructed within an occupational field.

In *The problem of classed inequality* (2.2) I explored how classed inequality has been researched within the workplace, and here build on approaches used within OS. I highlight how organisations are an important way to connect a classed individual with a classed context. Organisations are regimes of inequality, a nexus of practices and discourses which are shaped by and shaping of class and classed inequality. I show how using a discursive approach enables a critical examination of the assumptions and discourses which underpin what is valued within a particular workplace e.g. efficiency, lean productivity, talent or polish. Broadening this out to an occupation enables an understanding of the dynamic context within which organisations operate; whilst using Bourdieu's concepts of field and capital enables an examination of this as a process of discursive struggle, underpinned by power. I borrow from the ideal worker concept (Acker, 1990; Williams, 2001) to re-articulate habitus as an ideal habitus. And also

show that using the discourse of career as a research tool, highlights the rules of the game by which individuals are expected to struggle too i.e. the ways of being (ideal habitus) and having (capital) that are constructed as valuable.

Using Bourdieu's theoretical framing with a discursive approach thus provides a valuable lens through which to examine how class and classed inequality are constructed within an occupational field. It addresses gaps within OS and does so in an innovative way. The research question is *How do people who work in UK museums construct class and classed inequality in relation to their field and their career?*

In the next chapter I examine the value of exploring this within UK museums. I look at what is known about the construction of the museum field and the museum career.

Chapter Three: UK museum work

In the previous chapter I examined how class and classed inequality have been theorised and researched within the OS and sociological literature. I argued that class and classed inequality can be treated as discursive constructs and that Bourdieu's concepts of field and capital - as sites of discursive struggle - help explore these processes within a particular occupational context. Salient too is an examination of the way career is constructed, invoking particular ways of having (i.e. capital) and being (an ideal habitus) that then might contribute to versions of class and classed inequality. Hence the research question for the thesis is *How do people who work in UK museums construct class and classed inequality in relation to their field and their career?*

This Chapter examines the research context, UK museum work, in greater depth. I consider why this is an important and valuable site in which to examine class and classed inequality; look at how the field has developed historically, how museum work has been researched and consider what is known about class and classed inequality within the field. Museum work has been overlooked in the OS and sociological literature, so I draw on the museum studies literature (a discipline which focusses on the role and practice of the museum). Although even here work has been overlooked so where relevant I bring in OS research examining the broader cultural sector in the UK, of which museums are arguably a part.

The outline of the chapter is as follows: in 3.1) *Why the field of museum work?* I explore why museum work is an important site within which to explore class and classed inequality. In 3.2) *Constructing the field*: I examine how the field is defined; how its historical development has been charted in the literature as well as its relationship to a political and market economy. In 3.3) *UK museum work, career and class* I explore how institutions and work positions have developed within the UK, how they are currently positioned. I also explore research which examines how the museum – or cultural - career is constructed, how this relates to class and classed inequality within the field and the data and research available on the demographics and dynamics of class and classed inequality within the field of museum work.

3.1) Why the field of museum work?

The museum field has been under-researched within OS and sociological studies of class and classed inequality at work, and yet has particular value as a research site. Museums play an influential role in creating institutionalised versions of history and culture (Oakes et al., 1998). Indeed it has been argued that museums have contributed to the production of dominant forms of cultural capital, used as ways of disciplining the working class (Bennett, 1995), at the same time as distinguishing the middle (Bennett et al., 2010). This raises important questions as to how cultural dimensions of class – as well as economic ones – are constructed, not just by museums but also within them. Museum work itself is characterised by diversity, at least in terms of museum type (e.g. national, local, university, corporate museum) and job role (e.g. curators, conservators, educators, security) (Boylan, 2006; Wilkinson, 2014). It hence provides an important and relevant site in which to explore processes of classing; the discourses by which such work might be hierarchized and types of capital valued. I outline some of these issues briefly below, before examining the construction of the field in greater detail in subsequent sections.

As noted, museums play a particularly powerful role as constructors and classifiers of culture. They make decisions about which material culture to collect for posterity and which not; identify, classify and differentiate objects and construct taxonomies, displays and narratives based upon these (Macdonald, 2006). Through various technologies, they impose particular ways of looking at and seeing such objects (Bauer & Pierroux, 2014; Bennett, 1995; Rose, 2007). They construct the subjects and spaces by which a visitor may explore the collections; choosing disciplinary, chronological or thematic boundaries (Italian Renaissance art, or Sussex farming implements, for example). Such curation of objects has the power to tell the visitor, and the public, something of who they are, were or can be, and indeed is used by national and municipal governments in celebrating national (Grenfell and Hardy, 2007), local (Hudson, 2014) and culturally dominant identites (Belfiore, 2002; Mason, 2004).

Museums have also been implicated in contributing to the "classing" of society. Some scholars argue that the development of museums in nineteenth century Britain was a form of cultural capitalism, bound up with a dominant class's ambition to impose their

culture on the working class (Savage et al., 2005; Warde, 2016). Even if such ideology was not the case, the formation of many high-profile museums in the UK, and around the world, is linked to the powerful and wealthy (Grenfell and Hardy, 2007). And indeed continue to be: Griffiths et al. (2008) show an alignment between a social elite (based on *Who's Who*) and the trusteeships of national, London-based, museums and galleries. Museum-visiting has also long been associated with class. Bourdieu was seminal in this regard, producing the first comprehensive survey of museum visiting in 1960s France (Bourdieu & Darbel, 1991), and subsequently of cultural consumption more broadly (Bourdieu, 1984). He concluded that museums appealed to an emerging, middle-class, high in cultural capital (i.e. education), low in economic capital. Public museums offered them the legitimate space to see art and artefacts, which (unlike aristocratic collectors) they could not afford to own; whilst education gave them the cultural capital to talk about and appreciate collections (Grenfell and Hardy, 2007). Whilst Bourdieu's research was of its time, subsequent research suggests museum-visiting today is still classed along similar lines, even if tastes may be more shaped by age and gender (Bennett et al., 2010). Indeed, the classed nature of museum-visiting is such that it was used as an indicator of class in *The Great British Class Survey, 2011* (Savage, 2015).

Whilst scholars have been reflective and critical of museums classificatory power (e.g. Bennett et al., 2010; McCall & Gray, 2014), there has been very little research into class within museum work. Indeed, there has been very little research into the museum workforce, at all (McCall & Gray, 2014; Viau-Courville, 2016). Studies exploring the history of the field suggest that it is characterised by an increasing diversification of work, as the purpose of the museum has expanded beyond the preservation and display of objects to engaging audiences (BOP Consulting, 2016; Boylan, 2006; Wilkinson, 2014). Hence, roles have developed from the scholar-curator to roles covering exhibition designer, educator, interpreter, marketing and front of house (Boylan, 2006; Wilkinson, 2014). This diversification of work however is not necessarily matched by a diversity of worker (or at least we do not have enough data to know). The research available on the composition of the museum workforce is patchy but suggests it is more female, white and with higher than average educational capital, and potentially a higher-class origin, than the UK working population as a whole (Arts Council of England, 2019; O'Brien et al., 2016) (See also discussion in Section 3.3.4 and Table A below).

Research into the dynamics of museum work – how to get in and get on, and who is thus able to do so – has been minimal, though suggests a focus on volunteering and gaining postgraduate qualifications is accepted practice (Davies & Shaw, 2013; Hutchison & Cartmell, 2016).

It may be that we can learn from research into other cultural fields, where issues of diversity and class have increasingly gained attention (Conor, Gill, & Taylor, 2015; O'Brien, Allen, Friedman, & Saha, 2017). This consistently shows that cultural work is precarious, requires significant capital (economic, cultural and social) and is thus stacked against people from a working-class background e.g. in acting (Friedman et al., 2017), advertising (McLeod et al., 2009), crafts (Morgan & Nelligan, 2015), theatre (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007), and TV (Friedman & Laurison, 2019; Randle et al., 2015). As such the creative and cultural industries (CCIs), of which there are nine in the UK[1], are dominated by people with middle class backgrounds (O'Brien et al., 2016), and largely shown to be failing in the meritocratic promise afforded them by earlier scholars (e.g. Florida, 2002, 2014).

Despite some potential cross-over with cultural fields, museum work in the UK has developed from its own particular history, with associated practices and discourses, as alluded to above and hence warrants particular attention. In the following sections I explore these in greater depth showing how the field has developed historically, and in relation to other fields, as well as how it is structured today.

3.2) Constructing the field

In this section I explore how the museum field is constructed within the literature. I explore briefly how the museum is defined, showing that most definitions pivot on the idea of a collection open to the public, yet are subject to struggle over what these collections are for. I then examine how the field has developed historically, from early origins, through to the current day, noting its relationship to the government and also to the economy. I show how the idea of a collection is an enduring theme, purposed for

[1] The nine CCIs in the UK are currently, advertising & marketing, architecture, crafts, design, film and TV, IT, publishing, Museums, galleries & libraries, Music and performing arts (O'Brien et al., 2016)

and by particular ways of "knowing" and "showing", which are also shaped by wider political, economic and epistemological contexts.

3.2.1) Attempting a definition

Sourcing one shared definition of the UK museum is a difficult task. In part this is because museums in the UK are subject to four different administrations. Thus, accrediting bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland use the Museums Association 1998 version, whilst those in Scotland use the International Committee on Museums (ICOM) 2007 version, below.

> *Museums are for people to explore and learn from collections for understanding and inspiration. To do this, a museum collects, safeguards, researches, develops, makes accessible and interprets collections and associated information, which it holds in trust for society. (Museums Association, 1998)*
>
> *A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment (International Committee on Museums, 2007).*

It is also because definitions of museums have been changing. Candlin (2017), who has been leading a project to "map museums in the UK" identifies five definitions of museums used within the UK since 1960, including the two listed above. And, whilst conducting this research, museum practitioners around the world have been designing a sixth definition, as part of the International Standing Committee on Museums Definitions: Prospects and Pitfalls, 2019, a process which is ongoing[2].

Whilst there is not uniformity of definition there is some consistency as to what a museum comprises; i.e. a collection. As Candlin, (2017) notes, all five definitions she sourced cohere around a concept of a museum as an institution, implying a building, and also place a high emphasis on the objects. Indeed, collecting practices, collections and objects, form something of a cornerstone to defining a museum (Macdonald, 2006).

[2] This particular standing committee has been disbanded and taken over by a Committee for Museum Definition, Prospects and Pitfalls 2. Unfortunately there is now very little information about its work online as of November 2020

Scholars use the idea of a collection and collecting, to trace the development of the modern-day museum (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). Alongside this, definitions of museums stipulate the maintenance of a collection which is open to (at least some of) the public. Hence this distinguishes a "public" museum from the private collector (Abt, 2006).

However, the question of what a museum is, is complicated by what (or who) a museum, and its collections, are for. Such questions have been raised by practitioners themselves, a paradigmatic shift known as the "new museology" (Macdonald, 2011) which emerged in the 1980s (and which I discuss further below in 3.1.2). Hence, Candlin (2017) observes how museum definitions have changed to reflect a move from museums being inward facing storehouses to outward facing vehicles of public engagement (Candlin, 2017). This may have facilitated a testing of boundaries as new museums without collections have appeared (corporate museums, science centres and virtual museums), prompting discussion and reflection around what "counts" as a museum (Macdonald, 2011). Alongside this, various UK governments since the Thatcher administration of 1979-1990 have increasingly scrutinised the public value of UK museums (Belfiore, 2002), as well as encouraging a more entrepreneurial field (Belfiore, 2020; Wilkinson, 2014). This has led, on the one hand, to a proliferation and diversification of the field, in terms of museum type, size and governance. It has also led to a sharpening up of boundaries between the field as a publicly funded one - not for profit or for public good - and as a "for profit" enterprise, which is also reflected in definitions. This, Candlin, (2017) argues is misplaced and exclusionary to smaller independent museums who often need to generate their own income, hinting at a hierarchy not only of size but also of say.

These definitional 'struggles" suggest that the museum is not only responding to context but is defined by its context. Hence, whilst the idea of a collection is enduring and predominates, the question of what this collection is for is subject to significant debate. This is evidenced by the attempts of ICOM's Committee in 2019 to craft a "new" definition. The version is far from clear, is trying to be all things to a lot of people, and indicates a field struggling to assert a clear identity[3]. To gain a fuller understanding of

[3] As of November 2020 the previous worked definition is no longer available on the ICOM site. However a version is available on this site: https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2019/07/31072019-icom-reveals-updated-museum-definition/#

the UK museum today, I argue it is important to take a longer and more critical look at how it has developed in context. I turn to this next.

3.2.2) Ways of knowing and showing: the origins of the museum

In tracing the history of the museum, scholars locate its origins differently depending on how they define it. Hence the museum has been variously connected to the semantically similar Mouseion of Alexandria or the Ancient Muses (Abt, 2006; Hatton, 2012); the political and social ambitions of the De Medici in Renaissance Florence (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992); and to an Enlightenment ambition to know and order the world (Hatton, 2012). Within these trajectories, the notion of a collection is consistent. And this is linked to two related activities; that of "knowing" (i.e. collections that facilitate scholarly inquiry) and that of "showing" (i.e. displaying forms of knowledge, or of one's own discernment and status). Both these activities are themselves shaped by broader conditions of possibility – epistemological, political and economic concerns. I consider these issues below.

A salient theme in these historical accounts is the museum's relationship to particular ways of knowing. This is both as a facilitator of knowledge, and also how it is shaped by particular "knowledge" contexts. Hence (Abt, 2006) constructs a trajectory connecting the museum to collecting practices and scholarly inquiry from the time of Aristotle, through the late Renaissance and Humanist revival, to the Enlightenment. Hatton (2012) too constructs one version of museum history through ways of knowing; from the Ancient Temples of Contemplation through to the seventeenth century practice of creating Cabinets of Curiosity or Wunderkammer. Such Cabinets, which became widespread amongst the European aristocracy, were premised on an Enlightenment ambition to build a complete object-based encyclopaedia of the world and have commonly been located as a basis of modern-day museum practice (Hatton, 2012). Hooper-Greenhill (1992) argues however, that such ways of knowing need to be understood within their own particular knowledge contexts. She thus adopts a Foucauldian analysis to explore museum history through particular epistemological shifts, from a Renaissance, to a classical to a modern episteme. The collecting interest of the de Medici in Renaissance Florence for example – sometimes seen as heralding the first museum in Europe – was facilitated by a shift in the way of "seeing" Ancient

Greek Statuary, no longer as old or bad magic (and hence buried), but increasingly valuable and learned. This also offered the possibility of new subject positions for both collector and artist; as learned "discerners" of classical form. Hence, the museum can be seen as a vehicle for ways of knowing – both a constructor of and constructed by particular epistemologies (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992).

The museum is also related to ways of showing. This can be seen in the simple act of showing the collections, and hence constructing the museum as a public space as opposed to a private collection. Or showing in terms of a symbol of status, prestige or wealth. Sometimes knowing and showing are connected, as can be seen in the Library of Alexandria; a show piece of learned-ness for King Ptolemy Soter 1 (Abt, 2006). Showing objects could also be about power, both a symbol of and facilitated by. This is evident in the early Roman practices of publicly displaying statuary, arguably a triumphalism over the past (Abt, 2006). And was also the case with the House of de Medici, also sometimes described as Europe's first museum. Opening up their house, enabled the de Medici to display their artistic taste and knowledge, as well as demonstrate their wealth, power and influence, to visitors of their choosing. It thus conferred a level of status on both collector and "seer" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). Likewise, it was also made possible by a confluence of conditions which enabled the de Medici to control early forms of banking. This also enabled them to monopolise collecting practices by being able to pay collectors to collect on their behalf.

As the House of de Medici showed, the dual activities of knowing and showing are also bound up with questions of money. Renaissance collecting practices in Europe, often associated with trade and exploration, were expensive. Collectors were either wealthy individuals themselves or were able to secure the support of royal or aristocratic households in return for the honour of being associated with a collection. This system of patronage - money from wealthy individuals for enduring recognition – is still a form of support for many museums in the UK today (Abt, 2006).

In locating the origins of the museum then, scholars effectively constitute it as an object. The museum is delineated by collecting practices, purposed for and shaped by particular ways of knowing and showing. It is also bound up with issues of money.

Increasingly within the UK, these themes are shaped by the museums role in a political economy and I explore these next.

3.2.3) The museum as a public institution

From the late seventeenth century, the museum as public institution emerged. Challenges to divine authority, political in the form of the English or French Revolutions, and epistemological in the case of Enlightenment thinking and humanism, fostered the discourse of a "public good" (Abt, 2006; Mason, 2004). In was in this spirit, that Elias Ashmole, a self-made solicitor, courtier and collector, bequeathed his collection to Oxford University in 1683 with the stipulation it be made available for public inspection[4]. The Ashmolean is commonly held to be the first public museum in the UK. In France, the Revolution of 1789, and a discourse of equality, transformed the Louvre, a comprehensive private collection of European art, into a museum open to all. And across Europe, the Napoleonic Wars facilitated the redistribution of objects from private ownership to the state (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). This established a European hierarchy of museums with Paris at the centre, followed by other European capitals (Milan for example, and Brussels) and then regional museums across France.

The changing political landscape also shaped how museums presented their collections (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). Old forms of knowing, with aristocracy or royalty at the centre of a represented universe, which typified many of the private collections, were replaced by Enlightenment ambitions for order and scientific rationality. Where once objects were displayed for similitude, now they were displayed and ordered according to differences. (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). Public museums thus emerged as classifying houses, projects to impose and show taxonomical order on the world (Bennett, 1995; Fyfe, 2006). The art galleries of Europe rearticulated their collection to hang paintings by country and school, emphasising the increasing importance of asserting national identities (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992; Mason, 2004).

The museum as a vehicle for "showing" also became bound up with political aims. Museum collections served to confer status and legitimacy onto developing democracies, nation states or municipal centres, as well as powerful leaders and private

[4] The collection comprised *naturalia* and *artificialia* (Abt, 2006)

individuals (Grenfell & Hardy, 2007; Mason, 2004). This can be seen in the UK by the legal enactment and naming of museums; the setting up of the British Museum in 1753; the National Gallery in 1824; the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1852, or the Tate, named after its benefactor Henry Tate (Grenfell & Hardy, 2007). This institutionalising of collections contributed to the construction of the UK's national identity; showcasing artistic taste; craftsmanship and enterprise for example (Bennett, 1995). This relationship is two way; as museums bestow status and capital onto a governing class, so a governing "class" can bestow status on to museums (Grenfell & Hardy, 2007). These early museums, with a foundational remit to represent the nation, were able to acquire bigger collections, and also received greater funding than those with a local or municipal remit (Wilkinson, 2014). The power of the national nomenclature can be seen in the case of Liverpool Museums. In a fortunate twist in local government reform in 1974, Liverpool regional museums acquired national status. Comparing the fortunes of Liverpool with Bristol and Glasgow, three similarly sized museums, Wilkinson (2014) shows how Liverpool's funding grew exponentially, enabling it to buy collections, compete for funding and employ more staff.

More critically, some scholars argue that the role of museums in facilitating "knowledge" became politicised. Bennett (1995) also adopts a Foucauldian analysis to argue that the public museum in Victorian Britain became part of the ambition of a dominant class, keen to educate and civilise the public. A discourse emerged proposing culture could uplift the mind of the ordinary person; it would keep the "working man" out of the pub and with his family (Bennett, 1995, p. 32). Bennett argues that museums distinguished themselves from other "heterotopia"- places which represented an "order of things" away from the everyday context of those things e.g. exhibitions and visiting fairs – by privileging this uplifting and educational purpose. It was in this vein that a network of municipal museums was established (along with libraries and schools) as part of the Public Library Acts of 1850 and 1892. It highlights a unique purposing of museums in the UK with an educational remit. However, Bennett (1995) argues that this educational distinction concealed the disciplinary similarities between museums and other public buildings, such as prisons, stations and department stores. These all constructed a division between those who could be seen – the visiting public – and the watchful gaze of the official, often behind the scenes (Bennett, 1995). This distinction can arguably be the case with museums; as the curator or exhibition designer constructs

ways for the visitor to see and in effect be seen, whilst they themselves remain hidden (Rose, 2007).

The increasing political interest in museums however did not always come with matching public funding (Wilkinson, 2014). As Abt (2006) argues, from the get-go national museums were never wholly funded by the government and needed to raise their own funds. And smaller, local museums, have often had to fight for resources within a crowded space, competing with libraries and culture in particular and social services and schools in general (Wilkinson, 2014). Several government commissions and reports in the twentieth century have assessed the needs and responsibilities of museums, and whilst finding them in need of some reform, have not given them the funds they had asked for (Wilkinson, 2014).

In the late twentieth century, the role and funding of UK museums as public institutions was increasingly under political scrutiny. Until the late 1970s, the post-war political discourse reflected the broader post-war compromise (Crompton, 2008), whereby cultural institutions retained state funding as long as they remained, at least in name, accessible to everyone (Belfiore, 2002). This changed however with the managerial, neoliberal climate instigated by the Conservative government from 1979 onwards, which raised questions as to the value of museums, and culture more generally. Increasingly museums needed to justify their value on both economic, and under New Labour (1997-2010), on social grounds. Under New Labour museums received a great deal more funding, particularly regional museums via the Renaissance in the Regions (RiR) programme (Belfiore, 2002; Wilkinson, 2014). However, the price for government funding has arguably been a more explicit politicising of museums, charged with meeting government social inclusion agendas, something that not everyone feels museums are best equipped to do (Belfiore, 2002; Hadley & Gray, 2017).

At the same time a "new museology" emerged through which practitioners raised questions around the public role of the museum. This was in part facilitated by epistemological challenges; the political will of a new generation and the bedding in of their own museum studies discipline in the early 1980s (Wilkinson, 2014). This "new museology' shifted museum thinking away from questions of how to display objects, to questions of why display them at all, raising questions of whose culture was being

represented, and who the museum should be for (McCall & Gray, 2014). Concerns to represent and engage a broader audience were thus constructed as both a moral wish to achieve equality and social justice, and a challenge to the scientific impartiality of the museum project. (McCall & Gray, 2014; Wilkinson, 2014). However, not everyone agrees and debates over the social purpose of the museum, sometimes constructed as intrinsic versus instrumental value, still reverberate throughout the museum studies literature (Belfiore, 2002).

The UK museum thus has a long history as a public institution, and hence a close, though precarious relationship to the political economy. Collections have been repurposed for particular ways of knowing and showing, and the state has adopted the role of patron, to some degree. However, museums have been positioned somewhat paradoxically, sometimes seen as celebrated agents of national identity and governmentality and also as something of a poor relation. This echoes Bourdieu's argument that whilst museums, and culture in general, represent a dominant class, they are a dominated sector when it comes to the field of power (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993; Bourdieu & Nice, 1980). Increasingly, the UK government of the late twentieth century has celebrated a market ideology, and I explore the effect of this next.

3.2.4) Museums in a market economy

UK museums have a complex relationship with the market economy. Whilst many have roots in the wealth of private collectors, it is part of their logic, as indicated in the earlier definitions, that they do not profit economically from their collections, at least directly. Indeed, Bourdieu argues, it is through the disavowal of commercial interest, that museums can maintain the status of their institution and the collections within them (Bourdieu & Nice, 1980). However, as noted above, few museums receive all their funding from government and therefore need to generate income somehow.

From the late 1980s, museums have been increasingly subject to market ideology. The UK conservative government of 1979-1992, with Margaret Thatcher at the helms, heralded an enterprise, managerial culture with significant ramifications for museums (Belfiore, 2002; Wilkinson, 2014). Culture and heritage became the cultural and heritage industries (Belfiore, 2002) cultural bodies created "products" for "consumers"

and had to justify why the government or other funding bodies could "invest" in, as opposed to simply fund, them (Belfiore, 2002) Museum workers were increasingly called upon to be advocates, to manage and to demonstrate the value of their service (Hatton, 2012; Wilkinson, 2014). New job functions, the museum manager, the museum education specialist and marketing and commercial staff were constructed, and professional training and groups developed (Hatton, 2012; Wilkinson, 2014)

The market climate also facilitated a boom in new museums, with new forms of governance, the so-called independent museum (i.e. not funded by the state). In part this was facilitated by new sources of funding, the National Lottery set up in 1984. It was also an agitation on the part of a new generation of curators, frustrated by the lack of opportunity in state-funded museums, who saw the benefit of being more responsive to their audiences (Wilkinson, 2014). Independent museums, whilst not always entirely independent of state funding, are primarily self-financing, and thus embody a more enterprising business model. They are also often run as charitable bodies, and thus conform to the definition above, whereby objects are held in trust for the public good, as opposed to private profit (Candlin, 2017). Whilst many of these operate on a precarious basis, they now significantly outnumber state funded-museums, and have their own professional body, the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) (Wilkinson, 2014).

The influence of the market has created particular tensions within the field. A market-driven logic is argued to have potentially commodified history, shifting the discourse away from education to entertainment (Prior & Macdonald, 2006). It moves decisions about value and distinctiveness away from the hands of the curator to either the business manager within a museum (Hatton, 2012; Oakes et al., 1998); or a lay person outside of it (Wilkinson, 2014). Indeed, these discourses, which may potentially open museums up to people from different backgrounds, as visitors or workers, also threaten the power and status of the museum worker (Hatton, 2012; Holmes & Hatton, 2008; Oakes et al., 1998). It is perhaps not surprising that a purely market-style or managerial approach is hence resisted by many curatorial staff, who find ways to implement and maintain their own cultural power and autonomy (McCall & Gray, 2014).

These tensions have intensified in recent times following the global banking crisis of 2008 and the UK Conservative government's policy of austerity. Increasingly,

museums are faced with funding cuts forcing museums to adapt to a market-driven business model (Lindqvist, 2012). Entrepreneurial models are enshrined in the government's recent review of museums (Mendoza, 2017). Since 2010, 68 museums in the UK have closed, whilst many local authorities are engaged in transferring their museums to community ownership (Rex, 2020). Few studies as yet have explored how museums are adapting or changing as a result of these funding pressures. Though Rex's (2020) study of two local government authorities deciding which museums to fund in the face of cuts, shows the dominance of an economic and instrumental rationale. And Dick and Coule's (2020) in-depth case study of one museum showed how the discourse of the market was used flexibly, to both demonstrate accountability to auditors and legitimated as a means to an end (the end being a social and educational purpose).

The positioning of UK museums in relation to a market economy is thus somewhat mixed. On the one hand it has facilitated a spirit of enterprise and independence including new roles, new museums and potentially generating new audiences. On the other, it is seen to be an ideology imposed on museums by the government, an ideology that diminishes the status of certain roles and potentially the status and value of the field itself. These tensions are, according to Bourdieu, characteristic of cultural fields; representing a struggle between a field's autonomy e.g. being able to decide what counts as best museum practice, and heteronomy e.g. shaping museums to meet the demands of government, funders or the market (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993; Bourdieu & Nice, 1980). This has often been presented within the cultural studies literature as a debate over the intrinsic or instrumental value of culture, although as Hadley and Gray (2017) note, the intrinsic value of culture, or museums, is rarely articulated and is hence somewhat taken for granted.

Tracing the history of the museum then is helpful in being able to show the way the field is delineated. The UK museum field arguably shares a history with museums from other countries, and potentially from Ancient times. Here the notion of a collection is enduring whilst the way this collection is purposed - for and by ways of knowing and showing - is contingent upon context. In the UK the museum has a long history as a public institution and a more recent role as private enterprise, though tensions exist between museums as an autonomous field and its relationship with both government and the market. Critical to this is the question of money. What has been less explored is

how such competing agendas and dynamics shape the struggles and hierarchies within the field. In the next section I outline how the field is structured today.

3.3) UK museum work, career and class

In this section I outline the structure of the contemporary UK museum field. I consider the different types of museums that populate the field, different types of occupational role, the literature available on the museum career and the data available on class and the museum worker.

3.3.1) Types of museums

Today, in the UK there are an estimated 2,500 museums (Museums Association, 2019), with distinctions made between national, local authority, independent, military and university museums (Mendoza, 2017). These categories broadly correspond to legal propriety, governance and also funding source. As indicated in the previous section many national museums were the earliest to be established dating from the British Museum in 1753, with most local authority museums being established as a result of the Museums and Public Library Acts of 1850 and 1892, followed by a rapid growth of an independent museum movement from the late twentieth century (Bennett, 1995; Wilkinson, 2014). In addition, since the Renaissance in the Regions funding programme which ran from 1997 to 2001, a series of major museum partners were established, many of whom sit alongside national museums as part of the National Museums Directors Conference (NMDC), a lobbying body set up by national collections to *'coordinate their work and discuss matters of mutual concern'* (NMDC, 2019).

Museums are also distinguished by being accredited or not; a system of professional standards run by the Arts Council England, the Welsh government, Museums Galleries Scotland, and the Northern Ireland Museums Council. These emerged in the 1970s, from a concern amongst curatorial staff that some collections were not being adequately cared for (Wilkinson, 2014). Accreditation asks that all museums employ or have access to a professional staff member and consider issues of both collection care and visitor access. Accreditation is often a benchmark from which Arts Council and other bodies, make funding decisions. Some museums also have designated collection status, a

scheme which provides official recognition to certain collections outside of national museums (Arts Council England, 2019).

There has been a longstanding perception that local museums are a poor relation to national museums, the majority of the latter being based in London (Wilkinson, 2014). Wilkinson's (2014) examination of the local museum context between 1960 and 2001 suggests that this perception may be well-founded as local museums were chronically under-funded and subject to significant political upheaval. Whilst, national museums have also been subject to political and funding pressures - and indeed see their funding decline over the last decade (Gray, 2015), their status enables them to attract a greater amount of social, political and economic capital. This is evidenced by the proportionate amount of funding national museums receive compared to other museums, and in their direct relationship with government (Mendoza, 2017). They alone report directly to a central government department giving them direct influence, and as such, are endowed with a leadership role on behalf of the field (Mendoza, 2017). They are more likely to attract elite Trustees compared to regional bodies (Griffiths et al., 2008). And more often than not it is national museums who appear in the league tables for visitor attractions, a target often used by government to measure success[5]. Indeed, Frey and Meier (2006) suggest that certain museums have reached a superstar status, becoming household names and being able to capitalize further on their brand.

There are also distinctions between collection type. National museums are delineated by subject i.e. pre-twentieth century European art (the National Gallery); modern and British art (the Tate); science (National Science Museum); natural history (Natural History Museum). Local museums own an eclectic mix, often in subject-themed galleries. Museological debates over the classification of museum collections is beyond the scope of this PhD, though there is a potentially interesting connection to class. Hence in the Museums Studies literature, art galleries are tacitly constructed as more inaccessible or elitist than other collections (see for example Belfiore's (2002) discussion of the particular difficulty an art museum may face in delivering a social inclusion agenda). Bourdieu's research into museum visiting suggested a classed

[5] Seven of the top ten UK visitor attractions in 2018 were national museums; the first local authority museum, the Roman Baths, appears at 24 (ALVA, 2019)

association between art and folk collections for example. Art, he argues, appeals to an educated middle class requiring a level of knowledge not accessible to all, whilst folk collections can have an immediate local appeal (Bourdieu & Darbel, 1991; Grenfell & Hardy, 2007). Classed distinctions can be related to the historical roots of collecting. Ancient Greek statuary and art in general, as in the case of the De Medici, was often linked to questions of status whilst natural or scientific collections, as in the case of Aristotle or Ashmole, were linked more specifically to scholarly inquiry and research. Social history on the other hand emerges from a desire to go beyond the object and see history as a people's history (Wilkinson, 2014).

There is thus an implicit hierarchy between museum type; between national and local, accredited and unaccredited, art and social history. Whilst this has been explored – to some extent - in the context of a history of the field, and from the perspective of collections and audiences, it has not been examined from the lens of the museum worker. As with other fields, e.g. accountancy (Friedman & Laurison, 2019), it may be reasonable to assume that these hierarchies shape the museum career (i.e. higher status organisations represent a higher point within a career path). This may well have implications for class and classed inequality in respect of museum work.

3.3.2) Types of museum work

Museum work is also diverse and reflects the way the field has changed from object-centred to audience-focused practices (Boylan, 2006; Wilkinson, 2014). Hence, Gray (2015) outlines three types of museum work; a) work which is intrinsic to the idea of a museum and its collections; b) work which helps the museum reach out and c) administrative work which helps the museum function. The Arts Council uses similar categories in its recent Report on Diversity (Arts Council of England, 2019) i.e. artistic, specialist, management and other, suggesting that measuring diversity within each of these categories has a qualitative significance (though it does not specify in detail what each category entails). These are distinctions then that are potentially implicated in matters of diversity and equality. I thus explore the relations between these types of work further.

Roles linked to a collection - the curator, the conservator or collections manager - are seen to be more intrinsic to the purpose of a museum (Gray, 2015). They have their roots in the very early public museums (Abt, 2006; Boylan, 2006). The paid "scholar-curator" emerged from the learned societies of the eighteenth century and based their role on the connoisseur or academic specialist (Boylan, 2006); the curator was often the one who acted as CEO, or Director, although Boylan (2006) argues they did this reluctantly. The role of conservator and collection manager are traced to the Napoleonic wars and the setting up of the Louvre when "redistributed" objects needed to be assessed for value, road-worthiness and preservation needs (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). The specialist and quasi-academic nature of such roles, and the privileging of knowledge, has a formative and enduring influence on early ideas of the museum professional (Boylan, 2006).

However, the increasing outward shift in museum practice, framed by the new museology, has challenged the role of museum curator (Wilkinson, 2014). On the one hand, the curatorial role has been potentially narrowed and diminished as new professional roles; design, interpretation and education, have emerged, asserting their own professional status. Indeed, some even question the need to employ a "scholar-curator" (Viau-Courville, 2016). On the other hand the curator has been reconstructed as an outward-facing, professionally-streamlined, media-savvy role, required to engage new communities and construct culturally significant exhibitions (Macdonald, 2006; Prior & Macdonald, 2006). Gray and Bell (2013) discuss the rise of history programmes on TV, which creates opportunities for academic historians including curators e.g. Lucy Worsley, Curator at Historic Royal Palaces, and consider how this contributes to a particular, gendered (and potentially classed) media "subjectivity". Wilkinson (2014) touches on the rise of the "media curator" in her study, hinting at the move away from an object-heavy approach (the rather austere and didatic museum expert on *Animal, Mineral, Vegetable*[6]) to a more journalistic, story-based approach (epitomised by Neil McGregor, ex-Director of the National Gallery). The construction of these roles is evidently embedded in the broader struggles of the museum field itself (McCall & Gray, 2014; Prior & Macdonald, 2006).

[6] This was a BBC TV programme which ran from 1952 to 1959 in the UK in which a panel of experts had to identify objects as being *Animal, Mineral or Vegetable* https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p017bdl3

The shift towards audiences and a more managerial culture has also created tensions between specialist and general management roles (Hatton, 2012; Holmes & Hatton, 2008). Increasingly in local government, specialist curatorial staff often report to non-specialist staff in a quite complex hierarchy (McCall & Gray, 2014; Wilkinson, 2014). McCall and Gray (2014) examined these relationships and found that whilst the managerial staff had formal seniority, the curatorial staff had informal authority, able to effectively control the museums output. This thus subverts a normative understanding of hierarchical distinctions. The confused positioning of "management" is reinforced by the way it is constructed within the museum studies literature. Hence it is sometimes used to denote a senior role (e.g. McCall & Gray, 2014) and sometimes to mean a role that is not specific to a museum, such as marketing or finance (Hatton, 2012). In practice the distinctions between roles are probably a little more nuanced and blurred as some curatorial roles, particularly within small museums will be both specialist and manager (McCall & Gray, 2014; Wilkinson, 2014).

Tensions between specialist and "management" roles are arguably intensified over recent years by an ever-increasing claim to professional status (Boylan, 2006; Wilkinson, 2014). The professional status of the curator was signalled by the Museum Association Diploma and new ethical guidelines developed in the 1970s (Wilkinson, 2014). Other roles have also reinforced their own professional status and distinction by setting up specialist groups, professional standards and training routes (e.g. The Interpretation Group, the Group for Education in Museums, the Arts Marketing Association). The intensification of professional boundaries has potential consequences for who can claim the status of museum professional, potentially upping the stakes by demanding greater amounts of institutional capital. Indeed, in attempts to capture the diverse nature of museum work, ICOM has defined a museum professional as a person with an undergraduate degree, as a minimum (ICOM, 2017).

The category of work which is less explored than specialist and management, is that which is labelled "other" in the Arts Council's Report on Diversity (Arts Council of England, 2019). This work is likely to comprise a mix of roles: those Gray (2015) describes as providing administrative support; technical and manual workers which many museums employ (Boylan, 2006), or front of house or visitor service roles

(McCall & Gray (2014). Front of house roles occupy an interesting position, being at once the most visible role to the public and yet often overlooked in the literature. A rare and interesting example is Dicks (2008) study of ex-miner tour guides in a Welsh Mining Museum. The ex-miners were employed to lend authenticity to the Museum, though often their voice was constrained by a scripted performance. Whilst recounting the precarious nature of mining employment, the precarious nature of their current employment situation is obscured. Within this, class in the form of a collective but past identity, is an unspoken presence (Dicks, 2008).

The diversification of, and distinctions within, UK museum work thus reflect the broader changes in the museum field in the UK. As museums became more outward facing, new roles have emerged which have potentially challenged the historic status of the curator role. There are thus tensions between these roles, a struggle within an implicit hierarchy. In the next section I consider what is known about the museum career.

3.3.3) The museum career

As with museum work there is relatively little research on the museum career. The research that does exist suggests that as the field has become professionalised, so the demand for educational capital has increased. This has also no doubt been influenced by the expansion in HE in the UK in the last few decades (Abrahams, 2017; Allen et al., 2013), including the exponential growth in museum studies courses, rising from one in 1980 to over 60 today (Wilkinson, 2014). Some studies also suggest that the field has become more precarious, as museums, like other employers are downsizing (BOP Consulting, 2016; Durel, 2002; Janes, 2014). Hence working in museums – like other cultural sectors may also require negotiating a more enterprising self (Neely, 2020). Research also suggests that getting in often requires volunteering or working for free, a practice that has been shown to contribute to classed inequality in other cultural fields (Brook et al., 2019; Davies & Shaw, 2013). Overall the museum career has been relatively under-examined and hence its relationship to class and classed inequality is putative as this stage.

The different types of work provide some indication of how a career in museum work might be patterned. Thus, to become a curator would entail acquiring a particular set of knowledge and skills, whilst becoming an education manager would entail a different set, although there may be some overlap (Boylan, 2006; Wilkinson, 2014). A role within a national museum, which is larger might entail a more structured hierarchy whilst a role within a small, independent museum may mean getting involved in a wide range of tasks (Boylan, 2006). However, the distinctions and relations between the positions and the journeys required to achieve them still remain under-explored.

The general trajectory of the field seems to be one of acquiring greater amounts of, and increasingly specialist, institutional capital e.g. qualifications, or honorary positions (Boylan, 2006; Wilkinson, 2014). Indeed, the Rosse Report (1963) suggested that a "career" for museum workers was now possible because of the development of training opportunities hence implying an association between career and personal development (Wilkinson, 2014, p. 122). The power of educational institutional capital was also evident in Viau-Courville's (2016) practitioner case study. This study made a case for employing generalist exhibition project-managers able to facilitate diverse knowledge, and hence more cost effective than employing specialist scholar-curators. However, in tracing their careers, Viau-Courville, (2016) found that these generalist project managers pursued a very similar path to scholar-curators, acquiring museum specific postgraduate degrees and experience at well-known institutions. It suggests that specialist institutional capital is a powerful discourse in distinguishing the museum worker.

The valorisation of institutional capital is also accompanied by a growing number of courses offering it, facilitated by the growing market for HE in the UK (Abrahams, 2017; Allen et al., 2013). In 1980 there was one museum studies course. This significantly expanded with government backing (Wilkinson, 2014) and in 2019 there are over 60 universities offering a postgraduate museum studies qualification. This has the effect, as predicted by Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1989; Friedman & Savage, 2018; Webb et al., 2008) of creating a higher demand for roles within the sector, and potentially opening up the workforce, whilst also shifting the goalposts, and thus making some roles even more difficult to attain (Hutchison & Cartmell, 2016). Research suggests that some museum employers are suspicious of the value of many of these courses (Davies,

2007). Indeed, the development of the field of museology, and its shift away from practical questions of how to more critical questions of why, potentially contributes to a field where more abstract and ambiguous forms of knowledge are valued over specific technical skills.

Alongside the demand for qualifications, there is an increasing expectation that aspirant museum workers will bring with them museum experience, often gained by volunteering or working for free (Davies, 2007; Hutchison & Cartmell, 2016). The Mendoza (2017) report suggests between 93-95,000 volunteers in UK museums (based on figures from the Museums Association) although it is unlikely all these are people looking for a museum career. Brook et al., (2019) found that 37% of their museums and galleries survey sample (based on people working within the CCIs) had volunteered or carried out an internship[7]. They suggest this has a classed effect on two counts. First, those from backgrounds with higher economic capital can afford to do this; and second, middle class people see it as a valuable investment for the future, whilst working-class people construct these opportunities as exploitation. Indeed, work placements within the creative sector have been shown to act as a classing device. Allen et al., (2013) show how students with greater resources i.e. the middle class, can call upon their family connections to arrange more prestigious placements, are less likely to have to work whilst doing so and can thus use their placement as a signal of greater commitment to their chosen career, opportunities often denied to working class students. Abrahams (2017) shows that working class students are less likely to use contacts as this is seen as less honourable than relying on their own merit.

The cost of gaining qualifications and also of working for free has a classed effect. Whilst this has not been researched in museum work, it has been explored in other cultural and creative fields, as discussed in Chapter Two. Hence, having a reserve of economic capital – the bank of mum and dad for example – benefits workers in a precarious work environment such as acting (Friedman et al., 2017; Friedman & Laurison, 2019), advertising (McLeod et al., 2009), and TV (Friedman & Laurison, 2019; Randle et al., 2015) for example. The austerity cuts of the UK government since

[7] Given the prevalence of volunteering as a practice, I included volunteers as participants in this thesis and hence as 'people who work in UK museums'. I explain this further in Chapter Four.

2010, has increased the precarity of the cultural field with an increased trend to short-term contracts, freelancing and zero-hours work (Conor et al., 2015; Randle et al., 2015). There is some evidence this is affecting museum work. Down-sizing, restructuring and outsourcing services has led to an increase in freelance work at all levels (Durel, 2002; Janes, 2014). And a recent survey, *Character Matters,* also suggests that museum workers have found their career has stagnated in recent times (BOP Consulting, 2016).

As discussed in Chapter Two, neoliberal ideologies distract from issues of class, placing the responsibility for risk (and failure) onto the individual. This facilitates an ideal worker subjectivity – and ideal habitus - resourceful, enterprising and flexible - which benefits those with other resources to fall back on. It also benefits those with a particular set of communication skills able to play the game of "brand me" (Conor et al., 2015; Neely, 2020) which tends to characterise creative career paths. This potentially "classed" and neoliberal focus on the individual, has not been critically examined within museum careers. However, it can be seen in the title and content of a museum sector report referenced above, *Character Matters* (BOP Consulting, 2016). This report explored the skills required by the future museum worker over the next ten years, with an emphasis on personal qualities such as resilience, flexibility and with a strong locus of control as described above. Whilst it appears here as grey literature, its salience in my initial data collection means it also appears as data in Chapter Seven.

As with museum work, there is thus very little in-depth research examining the museum career. What can be known is it is a career delineated by institutional capital, that increasingly asks for more, and potentially offers less by way of security. This may well have a classed effect, as can be seen in other cultural fields, valorising certain types of having and being over others. In the next section I explore what is known about class in the field.

3.3.4) Class and classed inequality in UK museum work

Whilst there is minimal research on museum work, there is even less discussion of class within this context. The museum studies literature is peppered with claims that past museum practice belonged to a learned and wealthy elite (Bennett, 1995; Hudson, 2014;

Macdonald, 2006; Mason, 2004) with an implication that this is no longer the case. This fits with the historic roots of the museum field as described in 3.2 above. As Grenfell & Hardy, (2007)'s analysis highlights, many national art museums, including the Tate in the UK, were made possible due to the patronage of wealthy and powerful individuals. However, the demographic portrait of the museum worker, whether past or present, is rather patchy.

Official figures report that 43,000 people work in museums in the UK today, with distinctions made geographically (e.g. 24,000 of these working in London and the South East) and work status (16,000 are part time) (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), 2018). Table A below illustrates the data that is available on the demographic make-up and highlights the difficulty of gaining a consistent overall picture, particularly when it comes to class.

Table A: Demographics of museum workers

Source	**Female**	**White**	**Class or educational capital**	**Sample**	**Issues with data**
DCMS 2017/8	66% female	Not collected	28,000 university degree	Based on the Labour Force Survey (LFS); not sure numbers	Not clear how data is collected
Arts Council Report 2017/18	52% of total *(though 17% unknown)*	43% of total *(though 48% unknown)*	Not reported	Major partner museums reporting on own data	Large areas of "unknown" as people do not respond

BOP Consulting 2016	72% female	92%	88% university degree 59% postgraduate degree 20% attended private school; compared to 7% of UK population	Self-selected sample of 2178 in 2016	Not representative
Labour Force Survey 2014 (O'Brien et al., 2016)	62.7%	97.5%	41% parents (NS-SEC 1) 27% parents (NS-SEC 2)	Sample of 13 respondents work in museums	Very small sample size
Panic Survey (2019) (using LFS)	68.4% female	2.7%	25.8% parents NS-SEC 1 28.3% parents NS-SEC 2	Representative sample of 2487 from across cultural sector 237 interviews	Museums a small proportion of sample

This Table represents a number of sources (reports from the DCMS, the Arts Council, and a recent skills survey carried out by BOP Consulting, an academic paper and a report using the Labour Force Survey (LFS)) which offer an incomplete and inconsistent profile. Only the LFS collects data specifically on class, as determined by parental background using the NS-SEC schema. However in both cases above, the sample is very small - only 13 work in museums. The other data sources are a bigger sample, though none are fully representative of the museum workforce. Whilst they do

not collect data on class per se, BOP Consulting (2016) does collect data on educational qualifications; over 59% of the sample have a second degree.

The patterns that do emerge suggest a workforce that is more likely to be female, white and with a higher than average level of education. The gendered nature of the workforce is a shift from the earlier roots in which the museum worker was predominantly male. Wilkinson (2014) suggests that the post-war expansion of university education in the UK in the 1960s and 1970s bought in a new generation of women, as perhaps did the expansion and diversification of roles within the field. Having more women in the workplace challenged practices: the setting up of a pressure group Women in Heritage, now Network for Change, for example increased debates about how women were represented as subjects of art, and as artists (Macdonald, 2011; Wilkinson, 2014). However, whilst they outnumber men as employees overall, there are fewer women in management positions (Arts Council of England, 2019) suggesting that more persistent issues of inequality are embedded within the field. This is similarly the case with the lack of ethnic diversity at all levels, despite efforts by the Museums Association and funding bodies to address this (Arts Council of England, 2019; Davies & Shaw, 2013).

The classed nature of the current museum workforce remains rather opaque. That museum workers have high levels of educational capital is not surprising considering the educational discourses shaping past practices (Bennett, 1995) and also the intensifying professionalisation of the museum career described above (Wilkinson, 2014). The BOP Consulting (2016) survey also suggests that a higher proportion of museum workers attended a private school than the rest of the UK population, a measure used by the Social Mobility Commission to indicate privilege (Social Mobility Commission, 2019). Griffiths et al., (2008) also explore this type of privilege, showing how a small network of Trustees of National Museum Boards are connected, if loosely, through a private school education. This is in contrast to a "newer" elite of Arts Council Trustees, less likely to have attended such schools and more likely to be Trustees on regional, arms-length bodies. Class then in the form of education and social connections may have a bearing on who is able to do museum work, or at least certain types of museum work.

The difficulty of knowing the class of the museum worker is in part then a lack of data. However it is more fundamentally a problem of conceptualisation and operationalisation. Class in the LFS is measured by occupation, and yet the occupation of museum work is diverse and changing as I have illustrated above. Moreover, not all work is necessarily equal. Tensions exist between older and newer forms of work; which arguably also have implications for how they are positioned in the field. Any approach to understanding or measuring class in the museum workplace needs to take account of these distinctions.

Furthermore attempts to measure class, whilst potentially valuable (provided one can agree on a 'measure') do not account for how or why classed inequality may exist. Rather, exploring the way in which field and career are constructed will throw a much-needed spotlight on the dynamics and patterns of class and classed inequality in museum work. This is valuable not just empirically but also practically. Attempts to address issues of class, such as the Museums Association *Diversify scheme,* have been limited, unsure how to define class, and focussed on helping certain people get "in" to the sector (through offering paid work placements) rather than stay in or get on (Davies & Shaw, 2013).

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined why museum work is an important and valuable site within which to explore class and classed inequality. I argue that museums are influential class-makers, constructing and classifying particular forms of culture which arguably reflects the tastes and discourses of a middle, if not a dominant, class (Bennett, 1995; Bennett et al., 2010; Savage, 2015). However, little, if any, research has been carried out into the classed nature of museum work itself (Viau-Courville, 2016). Definitions and historical accounts show how the museum has been socially constructed. A consistent theme is that museums are places which make collections "special" for particular audiences and do so through processes of knowing and showing. These processes are underpinned by questions of money and shaped by broader political, economic and epistemological contexts. The UK museum field has a long tradition as a public institution, though in recent decades has been increasingly called upon to demonstrate its public value.

The field is characterised by a diversity of museum types and job types with an implicit hierarchy and tensions between them e.g. between national and local, art and science, specialist and managerial (Gray, 2015; Hatton, 2012; Holmes & Hatton, 2008). A further boundary is between work often described as "other" and which is overlooked in most of the literature (McCall & Gray, 2014). These distinctions though have not been empirically explored. There is very little research on museum work itself, on what it takes to get in and get on or the classed nature of the workforce. What does exist suggests a field which has become increasingly professionalised and specialised; a career path which demands increasing amounts of institutional capital, and a workforce characterised by high amounts of it (BOP Consulting, 2016; Brook et al., 2019; Davies, 2007). In common with other CCI's there is an increasing emphasis on unpaid internships. However, the overall picture of how class and classed inequality has been researched within UK museum work is very patchy.

In this thesis I address these absences, exploring how the field is constructed as a site of discursive struggle. I examine how the field is constructed discursively in relation to other fields, how hierarchies are constructed within the field and how career valorises particular ways of having and being. I then explore how class and classed inequality are constructed in relation to these.

In the next Chapter I examine the methodology by which I have explored the research questions. For reference the research question is: *How do people who work in UK museums construct class and classed inequality in relation to their field and their career?*

Chapter Four: Research approach, design & process

In Chapter Two I made the case for examining class and classed inequality as discursive constructs, and for using Bourdieu's theoretical framework. And in the previous chapter I outlined why UK museum work is an important and valuable site in which to examine these processes. In this chapter I explain how I put these together as a research methodology and also describe in detail how I conducted the research.

The chapter is structured as follows. In *Research approach: epistemological and theoretical principles* (4.1) I discuss the epistemological and theoretical choices which underpin this synthesis. The thesis necessarily requires discourse analysis to address its task and chooses critical discourse analysis to do so, yet Bourdieu is not known as a sympathetic discourse analyst (Sayer, 2017). There is thus some explanation required to bring these two core 'ingredients' together. In *Research design: methodology and method* (4.2) I explain how this combination has helped shape the methodological principles by which the research was constructed. I then describe the *Research process* looking first at *Data collection* (4.3) and then *Data analysis* (4.4) explaining how I developed and used the analytical toolkit. The research question is *How do people who work in UK museums construct class and classed inequality in relation to their field and their career?*

4.1) Research approach: epistemological and theoretical principles

In the following sections I explain my epistemological position, outline my approach to discourse and discourse analysis and discuss the reasons for choosing a critical discursive methodology. Despite the potential synergies between Bourdieu's theory as one of language and power and the key tenets of critical discourse analysis (Wodak & Meyer, 2016), there are some tensions between them. Bourdieu diminished the role of discourse in his analysis (Sayer, 2017) and eschewed the relativist position associated with some discourse approaches (Bourdieu, 1991, 1992b). Furthermore, he has not always been regarded with epistemological sympathy by discourse analysts (Riach, 2007; Sayer, 2017). However, as I show, there is both legitimacy and value in combining these approaches.

I discuss how Bourdieu's theory can add value to a constructionist epistemology and a discursive approach, in particular a critical discursive approach, and vice versa. I explain how I have developed the concept of discursive power (combining Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital and symbolic power, see 4.1.2 below) and built on Fairclough's (1992) model of critical discourse analysis to combine approaches.

4.1.1) A constructionist epistemology

In this thesis I adopt a social constructionist approach to knowledge. This is a broad-based paradigm which developed as a critique of positivism across a number of disciplines (Burr, 2015; Burr & Dick, 2017). Cassell, (2005) locates its roots back to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle (1958, cited in Cassell, (2005)), which proposed the impossibility of studying an object without influencing it, though its influence within social psychology was popularised in the 1970s and 1980s (Burr, 2015; Burr & Dick, 2017), and its influence in OS somewhat later (Cassell, 2005). Social constructionism challenges the essentialised and universalising claims of positivist research, highlighting issues of context and power. Though diverse, it coheres around the four principles helpfully captured by Burr, (2015); a) a critical stance to taken-for-granted knowledge; b) an appreciation of historical and cultural specificity; c) a view that knowledge is sustained by social process and d) that knowledge and action go together.

Hence, rather than view objects such as *field, career, class,* and *classed inequality,* as essentialised, universal concepts, I see them as constituted through social (i.e. discursive) processes. Indeed it is my aim with the thesis to examine these processes. Context matters and in the analysis I take this into account societally e.g. the UK in the 21st century, occupationally e.g. the field of UK museum work, and empirically e.g. the research context, which I detail in this Chapter.

Bourdieu would not necessarily have labelled his work as social constructionist as he tended towards eluding categorisation (Riach, 2007; Webb et al., 2008) (though sometimes he used the term structural constructivism (Bourdieu, 1977; Özbilgin et al., 2005). Indeed, his work has been criticised for being over deterministic veering towards an objectivist account of structures which hold people in place (Riach, 2007; Webb et al., 2008) and a rather reproductive account of structural inequality which allows little

space for change or agency (Goldthorpe, 2007, 2008; Sayer, 2017). His style of language and focus on using particular methodologies (e.g. multiple correspondence analysis) may also have cemented a view that his theory was too objectivist for discourse analysts (Goldthorpe, 2007; Riach, 2007).

However, Bourdieu's thinking is suited to a constructionist epistemology. He was aware of criticisms of his work and argued that his 'determinism' was to remind us of the constraints within which research is practiced (Bourdieu, 1992b). Indeed, one of his significant contributions to the social researchers' toolbox (Webb et al., 2008) is that of the epistemological break, or researcher reflexivity (Bourdieu, 1992b; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). He argued that whilst academic researchers may have achieved an epistemological break from the everyday, developing tools which make the invisible visible (e.g. statistics, phenomenology) it is imperative researchers then take a second critical break and reflect on the concepts that they use (Bourdieu, 1992b; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). These come preconstructed. They are not neutral or natural but are shaped by time and place, ideas that have been historically instituted from earlier 'struggles' and are now embedded within academic and educational institutions and practices (Bourdieu, 1992b). Bourdieu's concept of reflexive practice offers a valuable methodological inroad into a constructionist epistemology. It is an approach I have followed in the literature review and which has led me to the research question.

Bourdieu's approach also offers a particular theoretical approach to a constructionist epistemology by proposing that knowledge is constructed through the dynamics of a field. Hence it is shaped not just by a macro, top down level which has been a longstanding criticism of Foucault's approach (Callewaert, 2006; Evetts, 2003), but by the hierarchies and dynamics within and between fields. The construction of class as an occupational category for example, is the result of a struggle between theory and epistemology within sociology, as well as a struggle between sociology, history and politics. It is a struggle in which individuals have stakes and participate, though within the constraints of their field. In this way then a Bourdieusian approach provides an opportunity to think about processes of construction which bridge levels; the macro and the micro (Chudzikowski & Mayrhofer, 2011; Tatli, 2011).

4.1.2) A discursive approach

Clearly as this research is examining the discursive construction of class and classed inequality, it necessarily focusses on discourse as its unit of enquiry. However, there are many different ideas of discourse in circulation. Indeed, it is an irony that in a field devoted to the analysis of language, its own language of 'discourse" should be so mired in confusion (Riach, 2007). In part this is because discourse is used to mean more than one thing; discourse as a field's linguistic repertoire e.g. medical or journalistic; discourse as an activity e.g. having a conversation; and discourse as ideational or ideological e.g. the 'ideal neoliberal worker'(Fairclough, 1992; Neely, 2020). Discourse also comes from different disciplines and traditions e.g. linguistics, history, literature, and from different levels of analysis e.g. Foucauldian discursive analysis (often described as top down), critical discourse analysis, discursive psychology, conversation analysis (Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

I take a view of discourse similar to Fairclough's (1992) early position; as a set of ideas by which certain objects (e.g. class) subjects (e.g. the working class person) or relations (e.g. classifier and classed) come to be known. These are reproduced both by texts (e.g. written, spoken or semiotic) and by discursive processes (e.g. an interview, a conference session), and thus can be analysed as such. I also take Fairclough's (1992) view that discourse has a dialectic relationship to social practice in that both contribute to and reinforce each other. And it is within its relationship to social practices that some discourses may be more or less visible. Those that have been institutionalised over many years for example are more likely to be 'taken for granted'. For example, the discourse of work as a competitive labour market whereby the employer has power to 'select' a candidate has become a naturalised and therefore less visible discourse. By contrast the discourse of the 'gig economy' is a newer, very specific and hence more noticeable way of describing people's relationship to work.

Bourdieu's own view of discourse (and he also used this term flexibly) is arguably shaped by his position-taking within a field of academic 'struggles'. He was particularly concerned to locate language within wider social structures of inequality and power (Bourdieu, 1992a). This was in response to structural linguists (e.g. Chomsky and de Saussure) who he argued focussed on language as a system without social context (Bourdieu, 1992a, 1992b). And also in response to post-structuralists (e.g. Derrida,

Foucault) who he argued afforded a level of power to discourse which obscured or denied social or political position (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Callewaert, 2006). He thus theorised discourse as a form of social practice which was shaped by and shaping of broader social relations. Discourse helps maintain dominant positions; those within them not only have power **over** discourse (which Bourdieu conceptualised as symbolic power) and hence can determine the rules of the game, they can also maintain power **through** discursive processes by legitimising the rules as fair, natural and neutral (described through concepts such as misrecognition, symbolic violence and doxa which legitimise and naturalise a dominant and dominated position) (Bourdieu, 1989, 1992a).

Bourdieu also offered a further take on 'discourse' as a form of cultural capital he called linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1992a). This Bourdieu used to describe the way certain linguistic resources e.g. accent and command of certain terms, are valued in a linguistic 'market' in which dominant language is seen as legitimate (Bourdieu, 1992a). Management studies is an example of this. As Tietze & Dick, (2013) argue, it is a field that trades in words, and in which English has become the dominant, taken-for-granted, language. Linguistic capital is also mediated by having the position from which to speak and be heard or ministerium (Bourdieu, 1992a). The politician for example, or the scholar or indeed the curator. Those with most linguistic capital have most linguistic power (Bourdieu, 1992a; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) i.e. the ability to world-make (Bourdieu, 1987, 1989; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), to bring things into view and hence construct a version of social reality. In this way then linguistic capital helps describe the power (or value) **of** discourse, or at least having certain discursive resources or capital.

Although he affords discourse a powerful role theoretically – ideationally (as symbolic power) and socially (as linguistic capital) - Bourdieu downplays it within his own empirical research. His focus being on other forms of capital and the social practices which underpin them (Riach, 2007; Sayer, 2017). This may be because he was concerned that discourse analysis pursued an internally referent system, a 'text of texts' (Bourdieu, 1992b, p. 47), without due regard to the social power he believed shaped it (Botma, 2017; Sayer, 2017). It was also because he was concerned that discourse analysis was a trend, a form of 'radical chic', facilitated by the advance of technology (video at the time) which limited engagement with the field and what he saw as social

reality (Bourdieu, 1992b, p. 47). Bourdieu's dislike of using discourse analysis however, as Sayer (2017) argues, makes it difficult to explain how power is legitimated and practised differently in different contexts e.g. national ones. It also misses the value of discourse analysis as an epistemological tool; a way of seeing how practice is legitimated and misrecognised. And indeed a route into understanding how field, capital and habitus are constructed.

Whilst Bourdieu downplayed an empirical focus on discourse (Sayer, 2017), OS scholars (and indeed scholars from other disciplines) have acknowledged the value of combining his theory with a discursive methodology (e.g. Dick & Nadin, 2011; Harrington et al., 2015; Riach, 2007; Sayer, 2017; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Scholars have used his concepts to examine how power - and class - relations are sustained and legitimated through discourse. As we have seen in Chapter Two, class advantage in graduate recruitment becomes misrecognised through the language of *shine* or *googliness* (Ingram & Allen, 2018). Dick & Nadin (2011) show how employers in care homes can enact symbolic violence against employees by using the seemingly naturalised discourse of the psychological contract; whilst Harrington et al., (2015) show how the doxic discourse of performance management enables HR managers, already constrained by limited power, to sanitise and legitimise workplace bullying. OS scholars have also used discourse analysis to examine the discursive struggles by which field and capital are constructed. Vos and Craft (2017) illustrate a struggle within the field of US journalism over the discourse of transparency through which cultural capital and the field itself is constituted. Harju and Huovinen (2015) illustrate how 'fatshionista' bloggers use language and visual techniques to resist dominant discourses of body image and hence re-valorise their cultural and social capital within the field of fashion blogging.

There is thus theoretical value and legitimacy in combining Bourdieu's framework with a discursive analysis. In doing so for this thesis, I have found it valuable to develop the concept of *discursive power*. This came about through analysis as I found I was using several terms to describe a similar process (e.g. symbolic power, misrecognition, distinguishing power or classing power). I use it as an heuristic device which draws on Bourdieu's concepts (symbolic power, symbolic violence, misrecognition, doxa,

linguistic capital) but focusses them on 'discourse'. I illustrate this in the Table below using examples from my analysis.

Table B: Illustrating discursive power

Discursive power	**Bourdieu's concepts**	**Example from findings**
Power over discourse	Symbolic capital related to having most capital	Funders (i.e. government) can insist on museums being inclusive or enterprising (Chapter Five)
Power through discourse	Misrecognition; symbolic violence, doxa	*A collections meritocracy* legitimates high status of national museums; the money underpinning them 'misrecognised' and distanced through history (Chapter Six)
Power (value) of discourse	Linguistic capital (right sort of capital)	Using the term *museum professional* to reinforce own status in field (Chapter Seven)

Discursive power thus acts as way to add clarity and focus to Bourdieu's concepts. It builds on symbolic power; i.e. how certain positions have power to construct the world in certain ways. I illustrate this with the example of funding bodies in the museum field, who can insist on museums being inclusive or more enterprising because they have economic capital that museums need. Discursive power also builds on the ideas of misrecognition, symbolic violence and doxa. The example here is the discourse of *A collections meritocracy* (described in Chapter Six) which was used in a taken-for-granted way to legitimise the status, government funding and attraction of national museums as a place to work despite them paying relatively lower wages. Discursive power also builds on linguistic capital; in that having certain resources enables a player to gain power (or value) within a field. This is more contested and relates to the idea of discursive struggle. I illustrate this with the example of the term 'museum professional' which was used to further claims of status. These are illustrated further in the relevant chapters.

Whilst using the term discursive power, as opposed to Bourdieu's own terms, runs the risk of being confused with generic or even specific articulations of the term (e.g. as a way of influencing policy (e.g. Fuchs & Kalfagianni, 2009), or the ability to command attention in a crowded media space (Jungherr et al., 2019)) I use it here to provide a simple but innovative way to connect the best of Bourdieu's theory on discourse (and his many concepts) with a focus on discourse as method. Discursive power is thus clearly related to capital and to the way this is valued within a field. I illustrate how it was analysed in section 4.4 of this Chapter, and also return to it in the discussion.

4.1.3) A critical discursive approach

For this research I have chosen to use a critical discursive approach. The value of a critical discursive approach, as we have seen above, is that it connects language to broader relations of power, as distinct from other approaches which focus on more local contexts (e.g. conversation analysis or discursive psychology). CDA is an approach which is problem-orientated and which aims to say something of the broader social dynamics within which discourse plays a role. It is thus an approach that potentially works well with a Bourdieusian lens and as such has been used by OS scholars to examine power dynamics in a range of fields (e.g. arts journalism (Botma, 2017), fashion blogging (Harju & Huovinen, 2015) journalism, HR (Harrington et al., 2015)). A critical discursive lens thus enables an exploration of the relationship between field, career, class and classed inequality, and in particular the power dynamics which underpin these.

There are many different types of critical discourse analysis. Indeed van Dijk (2013, cited in Wodak & Meyer, 2016) argued against using the term, as it misleadingly suggests there is one approach suggesting instead the notion of 'critical discourse studies'. The approach I use here builds on Fairclough's (1992) model. A benefit of choosing his approach is its practicability: he provides a detailed account of tools which one can use without being a trained linguist and offers one of the most developed methodological models available (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). (I explain his model in Diagram A below). It is also multi-disciplinary aiming to connect a linguistic analysis to a theory of social practice which enables a synthesis with Bourdieu's ideas. It also appears more suited to the task than does say a discourse-historical method (Reisigl &

Wodak, 2016), for example - which may allow an exploration of the development of a dominant discourse, but does not explore how people in the field actively construct or contest meaning within their field. Or van Dijk's (2016) socio-cognitive approach, which may offer a way of exploring how different groups within museums may 'buy into' dominant, ideological constructions, but fixes the focus on how people 'think' rather than the dynamics between discourses (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Thus, Fairclough's (1992) model provided a more versatile foundation for synthesis and development.

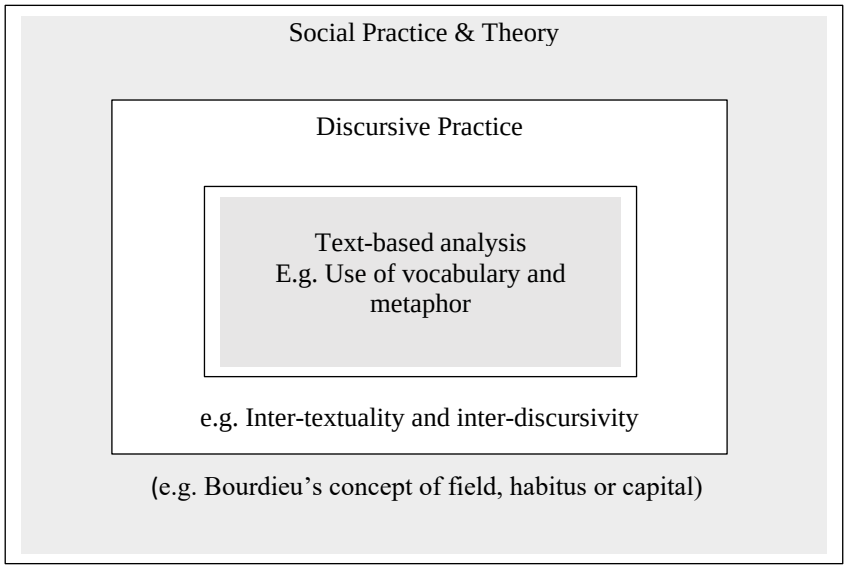
In crafting a methodological approach Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) argue that the researcher should take into account perspectivism, compatibility and translation, when combining theories. Fairclough himself did not borrow much from Bourdieu, while Bourdieu, as we have seen eschewed an internally-referent discourse analysis (Botma, 2017; Callewaert, 2006). However, I argue both are quite well suited in terms of perspectives. Both can be seen as giving a place to social practice as shaping and being shaped by discourse. Thus, whilst Fairclough acknowledges a debt to Foucault in theorising a constitutive role for discourse, unlike Foucault, he does not see all social practice as "discourse"; nor does he see power as solely internal to discourse (Fairclough, 1992). This accords with Bourdieu's view of discourse as we have seen above.

Both Fairclough and Bourdieu could be said to be compatible in sharing a political and practical view of the researcher's role. They are both critical of Foucault's relativist view that suggested a researcher cannot stand outside (and therefore be critical of) the discursive episteme in which they are situated (Bourdieu, 1992b; Callewaert, 2006; Fairclough, 1992). Fairclough (1992) places an emphasis on CDA as being critical of power. Bourdieu was increasingly vocal against the discursive and ideological power of neoliberalism in his later years (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2001; Callewaert, 2006). And they both emphasise the importance of an empirical basis to theory, Fairclough through linguistic analysis (Fairclough, 1992; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002) and Bourdieu through the use of use of his conceptual framework (Bourdieu, 1992b; Webb et al., 2008).

It is also quite simple to translate – or meld - Fairclough's approach with Bourdieu's theory. Fairclough's (1992) three-stage model (outlined below) proposes that

researchers analyse discourse in three ways. First, as text using a number of linguistic tools (e.g. use of vocabulary and grammar). Second as discursive practice looking at the way the text is produced, consumed (e.g. the event itself such as a focus group or conference session) and also how the discourse relates to other discourses (e.g. how each text relies on and anticipates other texts i.e. inter-textuality; and how different discourses are used in different combinations, genres, styles to construct new discourses i.e. inter-discursivity). Third is to interpret and connect discursive content and practice to social practice using an appropriate sociological or other theory. Here, obviously I use Bourdieu's.

Diagram A: Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis (1992) with Bourdieu's theory of practice



Combining elements of both is thus theoretically and practically valuable. Whilst Fairclough (1992) provides the three-stage model and a useful kitbag of linguistic tools, Bourdieu (1987) offers the theoretical lens and conceptual framework from which to interpret, as well as the useful methodological tool of researcher reflexivity. The value of this pairing has been recognised by other OS researchers who have used Fairclough's (1992) model to focus on textual analysis and Bourdieu's framework to provide a theoretical lens (e.g. Botma, 2017; Harju & Huovinen, 2015; Riach, 2007). The

analytical model I developed is not solely 'Faircloughian' or 'Bourdieusian' as I borrowed from concepts and analytical devices from other researchers. In particular, Jorgensen and Phillips's (2002) advice to examine ideas with an anthropological mindset (fitting for Bourdieusian approach), trying out substitution (to draw out assumptions and differences); and interpreting discourses as hegemonic, contested and taken-for-granted. The latter was useful for a consideration of discursive power and I describe the model in greater detail in 4.4.2.

Summary

The discussion above thus considers some of the challenges and advantages of combining Bourdieu's theory with critical discursive approach. There are some tensions which need addressing and in doing so, I aim to build a more substantial methodology. Bourdieu's reticence as a discourse analyst does not preclude his theory of language and power as a tool for other discursive researchers; and he offers some added value in the guise of the epistemological break; the field as a site of discursive struggle; symbolic power and linguistic capital re-worked here as discursive power. Conversely, using discourse analysis provides a 'way in' to Bourdieu's concept of field, a way that he himself acknowledged was not set in stone. I turn to this next.

4.2) Research design: methodology and method

Having considered how Bourdieu's theory and a critical discursive approach align 'on paper', I here consider how these guided the methodology. I explain how theory and epistemology shaped my approach to designing the research, along with ethical and practical considerations.

Clearly the research design is guided by the research question, and the object/s of enquiry (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). To remind the reader the research question is, *How do people who work in UK museums construct class and classed inequality in relation to their field and their career?* As with many doctoral research projects, the process of developing the research question was somewhat iterative. Indeed, iteration is one of the guiding principles of the research which I explain below. Hence this version of the RQ is not quite the same as the one I started out with (and is thus why as I explain below I ended up with data I did not then use). However the objects of enquiry have remained

the same. Hence the key task of the project has been to source the discursive constructions of *field*, *career*, *class* and *classed inequality*, by '*people who work in UK museums'*.

There are various ways in which this can be 'operationalised'. I structured the research in a phased way. In the sections below I explain why and how I did this, considering my approach to scoping the project, my choice of methods, the issue of reflexivity (practical and ethical) and practical constraints. As a guiding 'key' to the research I provide a simple outline in the Table below. Phase one was a pilot study comprising interviews and sourcing secondary data, phase two comprised focus groups and phase three individual interviews.

Table C: Summary of research design

Phase	**Aim**	**Method & Participants**
1) Field (pilot) March to May 2017	Scoping the field and planning next phases	10 interviews with individuals from representative bodies Secondary data e.g. reports, online data
2) Focus group April to August 2018	Exploring hegemonic, and contested constructions of field, career, class and classed inequality	9 focus groups. Individuals who (had) worked in the field who preferred to attend a discussion
3) Interviews May to August 2018	Exploring individual accounts of field, career, class and classed inequality	57 interviews (face to face, Skype, phone, email). Individuals who (had) worked in the field who preferred a private interview

4.2.1) Scoping the field; an iterative and inclusive approach

One of the challenges of using Bourdieu's concept of field, is in avoiding pre-constructed ideas of its limits. Bourdieu's field is not defined functionally, but

relationally by shared stakes (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008). However, these shared stakes are not immediately apparent to the researcher, (and even though I had worked in museums were not immediately apparent to me). Delineating the field, as well as the '*people who work in UK museums'* thus requires an iterative approach. As Bourdieu advises, you start where you can with what you can (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

I thus started the project with a scoping study in March 2017. At the time, I planned this as a context-setting phase (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). I knew there was little research on class in museum work but wanted to find out what was happening in practice. I chose the interview as the most fruitful method to get information that, at this early stage, didn't seem easily available. It was also with a pragmatic eye on relationship-building for the next phase. However, I also designed this as a potential data-collecting process (securing ethical consent from Birkbeck and consent from participants) and developing a semi-structured approach to interviewing individuals (see Research process 4.3.1 below for further details of this). I used my own knowledge of the field to develop a purposive sample (Saunders, 2012; Saunders & Townsend, 2018) of organisations that I knew had a claim to 'represent' the field – professional associations; trade unions; membership bodies; funders and university departments, and built on this using snowballing to recruit other organisations to speak to, and collect secondary data e.g. reports, webpages and recordings of conference sessions.

If we use an archaeological metaphor, this phase was thus part 'evaluation', and part 'excavation' of the site. It provided an orientation to the field, what was happening in terms of addressing class (very little) and the current context in which UK museums operated. It also provided valuable data. I used an initial template analysis of this data to develop phases two and three (as well as a more substantive discursive analysis, see below 4.4). A salient finding was the use of hierarchical distinctions between institutions and roles within the field. A further consideration was the difficulty I encountered asking about both class and career as abstract constructs. Participants talked about the difficulty of knowing class and the difficulty of talking about career without a personal frame of reference. I thus built on this 'knowledge' to anchor phase two and three.

Scoping the field at this level also enabled me to reflect on who the *'people who work in UK museums'* are. It was clear that museum work was often not clear-cut and that some people had moved in and out of the field, worked freelance or were unemployed but wanted a museum career. Again using Bourdieu's idea of field, I adopted an iterative and inclusive approach to avoid imposing definitions myself. As discussed in the Introduction, I took a broad view of museum work and also included those who wanted to work, had worked and did work in the field including volunteers.

4.2.2) Methods and data; the discursive anthropologist

As outlined in the introduction the 'unit of enquiry' in this research is the discursive constructions of *field*, *career*, *class* and *classed inequality*. Furthermore, I was interested in Bourdieu's concept of the field as a site of discursive struggle, between dominant and dominated discourses. Hence I was interested in discursive power; how some discourses have more influence than others, how did *'people who work in UK museums'* reproduce or contest these, and what might be taken for granted. It thus required something of an 'anthropological' approach, to ask questions about common-sense assumptions and take a step back from my own (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002).

Whilst many discursive projects prefer 'naturally occurring' data as a gold standard, this does have to be mediated by what is available in terms of the research aims (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). It is also arguable as to how much data is 'natural' as all data goes through some form of processing (Riach, 2007; Whiting & Pritchard, 2017). As I note above I did seek out such 'secondary' data in the pilot study and much of this was used (see 4.3.1 for description of data). However, this data was limited as there were few instances of museum workers talking of class, classed inequality or career (except for one excellent example of a conference debate on social mobility, see 4.3.1). Furthermore phase one had highlighted some of the common-sense assumptions of the field – its hierarchical construction – which I wanted to explore further.

I thus generated my own data in two ways. First, I used a focus group methodology to generate discussion amongst *'people who work in UK museums'* around hierarchies in the field, career, class and classed inequality. This enabled me to prompt discussion and hence 'discursive struggle' amongst participants. It also enabled me to identify what

might be shared, taken-for-granted and contested within the field, in a way that may be more difficult to gain from a dyadic interview. Second, I collected individual accounts of class and career through semi-structured interviews. The latter ensured accessibility to a wider range of participants who could not attend the focus groups or wanted a more private participatory space. I extended this principle by offering people a choice of taking part in either a synchronous interview (face-to-face; Skype or telephone) or in an asynchronous email interview. The latter in particular provided participants with flexibility about when and where they could participate; they were provided questions by email which they could respond to in their own time. I discuss this process in more detail in 4.3.2.

Both focus groups (Crossley, 2002; Kitzinger, 1994) and interviews (Cassell, 2005), are processes of social construction, discursive events. The researcher, as 'discursive anthropologist' can access not only the content of construction but also the processes by which these are produced and consumed. However, each methodology provides a slightly different way of accessing these processes. Fairclough's (1992) concept of coherence is useful to illustrate this point. Coherence explains the way in which a discourse is reproduced as a shared discourse, something that a particular audience will understand and hence tells us something of the discursive construction of context too. When people share specialist vocabulary, tell an 'inhouse' joke or a story, they are assuming that their audience, will understand it. Interpreting coherence in a focus group setting may mean noting how other participants respond to joke or story, e.g. as laughter (Robinson, 2009) or even silence. This says something about how people working in the museum field, construct their field. In an interview process, however, interpreting coherence relies on the researchers response to what a participant assumes is known or not known. This thus benefits from careful reflexivity as to the assumptions of the participant and how the researcher 'constructs' their own role in the interview process. For example, when I shared information that I had worked in museums, then participants might use language such "*As you know, Sam*" which then implies a shared knowledge in the field. I consider this in (4.2.3) further below.

In terms of 'data', I also asked participants to select images to represent their career. This built on the feedback of phase one that asking about career in the abstract was a difficult process. I thus used the language of the field to ask them to choose an object

that represented their career. However, in the final analysis, (see 4.4.2) I made the decision not to use the images due to the amount of data I had received through the above processes. I did however use participants response to the research process as data. When recruiting for focus groups and interviews, for example, participants replied to me and commented on the research but didn't want to take part in a focus group or interview. These were empirically useful and I thus sought out their consent to use these as data.

4.2.3) Practical and ethical reflexivity

Reflexivity is something of a 'broad rubric' within social research (Riach, 2009a, p. 357). Bourdieu himself applied it at the level of knowledge construction e.g. the epistemological break (Bourdieu, 1992b), and also at the level of the research method, reflecting on the power of the researcher (Bourdieu, 1999). It also functions as a responsibility of the good constructionist researcher (Cassell, 2005) – considering their influence and reactions to the interview - to something of a privilege of the scholar (Bourdieu, 1992b) – having the time to reflect on 'meaning' (and the time to reflect on one's privilege). Furthermore, scholars remind us that reflexivity is not a one-way or one-off process but happens for both researcher and participant at different moments (or throughout) the research process (Whiting et al., 2018). The question is thus not so much, was I reflexive as all researchers can answer yes, but how was this reflexivity 'captured' and thus used. Epistemologically, I used reflexivity as a way of critically examining how constructs were 'pre-constructed' in the literature, and it also forms the basis of my research question and my analysis (see section 4.4). Methodologically, I consider how I used reflexivity practically and ethically.

Practically, I ensured time and space for reflection within the research process. In phase one, after each interview I asked participants to feedback on the process and also made notes myself. I reflected early on as to whether to 'reveal' that I had worked in museums, and hence had insider knowledge. In the main I did, thinking that holding back may seem dishonest and not wholly ethical, and I then reflected on the effects of this. In the phase one interviews I found that it could help build rapport, and also highlight assumptions of 'insider' knowledge (as considered above). In the focus groups I found that it was still easy to play the role of 'outsider" and ask the 'anthropological'

question *(e.g. Why is a national museum considered the best?)* Whilst in the phase three interviews, my knowledge of the field was diminished in favour of the participants accounts.

The different methods provided different reflective spaces for participants. These ranged in levels of sociality (from group to dyadic to essentially alone) to different modes of reflection (e.g. though focussed talk, through selecting of images to the writing of responses). I didn't ask participants to 'reflect upon their reflection' so any analysis of this is purely interpretive. However, some participants who conducted an email interview did volunteer feedback on the process, which was positive. For them having the space and time to look back and then author their own account of their class and their career helped them think about it differently. Whilst there is an assumption in some literature that face-to-face interviewing is the "better" technique (Meho, 2006), or at the very least the method against which other interview techniques are assessed (Burns, 2010), offering a choice of methods to participants thus has benefits. Furthermore, email interviews may be preferred by participants who find the presence of an interviewer constraining (Meho, 2006; Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014), and not inducive to reflection.

Ethically, I reflected on my 'role' in relationship to participants. Ethical guidance typically focusses on avoiding inflicting harm on participants. However, I also had a notion that I wanted the research to somehow benefit those I was researching. At the same time I was concerned with building up my credibility as an academic researcher. These are not necessarily in opposition but are potentially over-ambitious, and I found this an ongoing struggle throughout the research. In practical terms it meant I was keen to be as inclusive as possible to everyone in the field. And ethically, I constantly reflected on the added value of my 'knowledge' compared to participants own. I return to this in the discussion.

4.2.4) Practical constraints

Any research project is bounded by a finite resource. The ambitions of above were balanced with my own limited time (of completing a PhD within four years) and budget. Decisions around method were shaped to some extent by this. Focus groups can

be logistically complex but do offer cost-effective reach. And email interviews save the time or costs of transcription. I also worked with organisations that could help me promote the research and find venues for the focus groups. Thus, museum networks offered to "host" the research in their region providing free venues (and in some cases refreshments).

Decisions around analysis were also shaped by practical considerations. I could not use all the data I collected. This was in part because of the decision to adopt an inclusive definition of '*people who work in UK museums'* and not turn participants away I thus collected too much data relative to the timescale and scope of a PhD. The data that has not been used for this PhD, will be used in future analysis. I consider this further in 4.4.2.

4.2.5) A note on evaluation

This thesis presents a discursive analysis for which, unlike a quantitative approach, there is no agreed evaluative criteria (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002; Symon & Cassell, 2012). As Symon et al., (2018) argue qualitative research within OS is often the poor relation to a more dominant positivist paradigm. Debates about criteria on which it can be evaluated have often been framed within these assumptions i.e. that knowledge production can be disciplined and homogenised and is seen to be the responsibility of the individual rather than that of the broader field (Symon et al., 2018).

The 'success' or otherwise of a discursive analysis such as this thesis depends on an appreciation of its epistemological underpinnings (Amis & Silk, 2008; Johnson et al., 2006; Symon et al., 2018). The thesis, as I show above, is underpinned by a constructionist epistemology and hence the knowledge produced is not 'discovered' but is constructed (Burr, 2015; Burr & Dick, 2017). Hence it is important to show how it is constructed. Some scholars have provided some putative guidance as to how to do this; including deconstructing one's assumptions and reflexively considering one's narrative production (Johnson et al., 2006); being epistemologically reflexive (Amis & Silk, 2008) or ensuring the analysis is solid, comprehensive and transparent (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Bourdieu, on whose theory this thesis is based, advised all scholars take

an epistemological break and reflect on how the constructs they are dealing with have been constructed (Bourdieu, 1992b; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

I have attempted to address these by being both reflexive on, and transparent to the reader about, the choices I have made. In this chapter I have aimed to thus provide a reflexive and thorough account of how I have designed the research and the processes I used to analyse the data. In the findings chapters (Chapter Five to Seven) I have been "solid, comprehensive and transparent" (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002) in how I have developed my interpretation and in the Discussion (Chapter Eight) I have reflected on my role as a researcher. I have also considered the broader context within which the thesis is produced.

As a PhD researcher I am aware that doctoral research is a learning journey. I have made the most of discussing my findings at conferences and with colleagues and published a paper with my supervisors which has given me some insights into the broader processes shaping academic knowledge production. I have often been advised that research should "tell a story". Whilst I am aware that this is a discourse in itself, I aim that, at least on that count, the thesis will have done so with 'solid' reference to the data and due respect to the participants

Summary

The design of the research was thus informed by a mix of theoretical, epistemological, and methodological principles, and shaped by the particularities of the object of enquiry; myself as researcher and practical constraints. This led me to a phased approach. In the section I describe the process of these phases in detail.

4.3) Research process: data collection

In this section I describe the data collection for each phase in greater detail. For each phase I outline the approach to sampling and recruitment, and the research process itself. For all phases I gained ethical approval from Birkbeck's ethical committee (see Appendices A and B) .

4.3.1) Phase one: scoping study

The aim of this phase as detailed in Table C above was exploratory; to scope the field and to help design the subsequent research phases.

Sampling and recruitment

As recommended by Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) I used my previous knowledge of the field to put together a purposive sample, selecting organisations with a claim to represent a number of people who work in the field. These included professional associations including specialist ones, membership groups, funding bodies, campaign groups, research consultancies, trade unions and university departments. I approached sixteen organisations with an Information sheet (see Appendix C), twelve agreed to take part, ten in a recorded interview and two in an unrecorded (which I didn't then use as data). One organisation didn't take part but responded by email. The decision of whether this sample was 'enough' was partly empirical, based on how far the data represented a variety of positions and also, pragmatic, was this adequate data to help design the next phase of the project (Saunders, 2012; Saunders & Townsend, 2018).

Research process

Data collection for both interviews and secondary data, took place between March to May 2017. The interviews took about an hour and I conducted these either face to face, by phone or by Skype, depending on the preference and location of the participant. Face to face interviews were conducted in a sound-proofed room at Birkbeck University, and Skype and phone interviews were carried out at my home. Participants taking part in phone or Skype interviews were advised to find a safe and confidential space. For each interview, the participant was asked to agree to the interview being recorded and advised that they could withdraw (until a certain point when the data had been analysed) and they did not need to answer any question they did not want to (see Appendix D, consent form). Clearly, the dynamics and experiences for people taking part in a face to face, phone or Skype interview are different and I reflect on these above in 4.2.3.

The interview was designed around four main areas (see Appendix E). The first aimed to understand how people constructed the field, through a discussion of the challenges facing museums in the UK. The second explored how participants constructed an

understanding of career within the field; the third looked at how issues of diversity and class in particular were constructed as barriers to getting in and on and how the field was addressing these. Lastly I sought further secondary data from each participant which might provide insights into workforce demographics, career constructions or classed inequality in the form of reports or data. I developed the interview in response to feedback, changing for example the question about career (is there a typical career path) to one more specifically about barriers or enablers to "getting in and getting on" in the field.

I also collected secondary and online data for each organisation that was either suggested by the interviewee or data that I had found on their website. I describe below the data sources that I collected and used for the thesis (See also Appendix F for the URL links to this data).

Table D: Summary of secondary data for phase one

Additional data	**Description**	**Sourced**
Character Matters (BOP Consulting, 2016)	Survey and report of skills required by museum sector.	Referred by 3 participants
MA Conference Debate *Working Class Heroes: social mobility in museums*	On MA Conference page a 60 minute publicly available video recording of a conference discussion on social mobility in museums. Featured four speakers and audience questions	Found by researcher
Museums Change Lives	On MA webpage for campaign which explains how museums can and do change lives	Found by researcher
Creating Better Places to Live and Work	On MA webpage explaining which explains how museums can and do create better places to live and work	Found by researcher

Creative Case for Diversity (Arts Council England, 2016)	A brochure explaining how ACE wants its funded organisations to tackle inequality and lack of diversity	Referred by 2 participants
The Mendoza Review; an independent review of museums in England (Mendoza, 2017)	A review of the function, funding and challenges of museums in the UK.	Referred by 2 participants

4.3.2) Phase two: focus groups

The aim of phase two was to explore how people working in UK museums constructed shared and contested versions of their field, career, class and classed inequality. As described it built on some of the exploratory themes of phase one, looking at the way hierarchies were deployed.

Sampling & recruitment

My initial plan had been to conduct five focus groups of between 6-8 people, each group representing particular occupational groups (for example a focus group of curators, conservators, educators, marketing staff and security/cleaning staff). However, I reflected that this would be imposing my categories onto participants and that actually it would be more valuable to mix people up to gain different perspectives. Practically it was also difficult (almost impossible) to arrange, given I also wanted to ensure accessibility to participants who lived all over the UK. As explained in the Introduction and 4.2.1 above, I had a broad definition of '*people who work in UK museums'* and hence participants could self-select based on having worked or volunteered, in the UK museum field,. I made it clear in the recruitment literature that all types of roles were welcome.

I arranged a pilot and two focus groups initially, at Birkbeck, between April to May 2018. As there was no budget to conduct the focus groups, I called upon the help of professional associations who had taken part in phase one to help me promote these and

also find venues for focus groups outside London. I designed and set up a website using Wordpress, *The Museum of Them and Us,* to help promote the research and recruit participants (for both phase two and three) and also re-designed my social media accounts to use as promotional tools for these phases. I started promoting these initial focus groups and asking for venues, in March 2018. See Appendix G for the information sheet, which also contains a link to the *Museum of Them and Us.*

The reaction from the field was of value in itself, both as data, and also for encouraging a reflexive approach. The response was bigger than I anticipated, and required me to think carefully about logging, tracking and replying to responses, whilst also keeping these safe and confidential. It was also, in the main, supportive, with many people claiming that class has been overlooked in the field (and some sending long narratives by email, which they gave consent for me to use as data). However, there was some negative reactions; initial debates on Twitter criticising the focus groups for being London-based, that doing a PhD in itself was a form of privilege and, when I did secure other venues, some of these were criticised for being exclusive. All of this was useful data as I could then consider the ways in which classing was taking place. There was also a shift when the research became more 'participatory' (Whiting et al., 2018) than I had intended; when people wanted to ensure their area or group was "represented" or to use the research for their own research, blog or other outreach projects. For me as a researcher, this necessitated managing a careful balance between ensuring people who wanted to could participate, whilst doing so within my own time and budgetary constraints and also making sure I was collecting data that helped me answer my research questions. It is why I ended up with more data than I needed.

As a result of the response, and with a great debt to various people, I was able to arrange nine focus groups between April to August 2018, as outlined in the Table below. Each regional group was promoted with the help of the host and regional networks and my own targeted communications, as general call-outs on social media. The final count was 63 participants. I didn't need (and couldn't afford) to use incentives and only two potential participants asked about this. Below in Table E I outline the participants

Table E: Participants at the focus groups

Date **Location**	**Occupational role (**listed in hierarchical order in which they mapped the status of their own roles in topic three (see above)
April 5th Birkbeck, London	Curator, Conservator, Digital consultant, Outreach, Outreach, Freelance researcher, Interpreter, Administrator
April 11th Birkbeck, London	Curatorial fellow, Curator, Curator, Curatorial assistant, Public engagement, Film-maker and academic
April 26th MA Offices, London	Director, Programmes and partnership director, Curator, Curator, Educator, Treasure hunt company employee
May 18th Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery	Collections Registrar, Textile Conservator/maker, Assistant History student/volunteer
May 23rd MA Offices, London	Head of collections, Curator, Learning, Learning, Project Manager, Museum development, Logistics company employee
June 7th Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester	Director and manager, Curator, Fundraising, Education, Freelance digital scanner, Events & exhibitions, Volunteer manager, Volunteer, Front of house, Front of house/porter
June 14th Bristol Museum and Art Gallery	Curator, Curator, Curator, Exhibitions manager, Outreach, Outreach, Project manager/secondment, Front of house manager, Shop assistant, Volunteer/seamstress
July 20th Cynon Valley Museum, Wales	Curator/manager, Curator/manager, Collections manager Freelance conservator, Marketing/everything else
August 10th Leeds City Museum	Projects Curator, Curator, Curator, Arts consultant, Education & outreach, Education & outreach, Outreach & marketing

The research process

With all participants I firstly confirmed their place and then contacted people a week before the discussion with joining instructions, an outline of the discussion, a consent form, and a request to think of a museum object to represent their career (see Appendix H for email and Appendix I for consent form). For all groups I arranged some sort of refreshment, chatted to people before they arrived, and then initiated each discussion by talking about the consent process, asking them to keep names confidential. I used two audio recorders for each group, in part because of the size and also in case one failed. Although some focus group practitioners (Meho, 2006), recommend bringing a second researcher along to take notes and observe, this wasn't practicable for me. I found that the main differentiating factor in facilitating each group was not region per se, but numbers. Thus, the Birmingham group was noticeably smaller which resulted in less discussion between group members, whilst the Manchester and Bristol groups were much bigger and livelier.

For each focus group I recorded a minimum of 90 minutes of discussion (some up to 120 minutes where people had been keen to extend the discussion); collected a number of career images (not everyone did this) and took pictures of the joint exercise (topic three described on next page).

In terms of the structure of the focus group, I developed a topic guide based around five sub-topics which would carefully lead participants from an initial warm-up to ensuring that the "focussed" topic was addressed. It was difficult to test this design, so my first focus group was promoted as a pilot. One of the useful bits of feedback from that pilot was in future focus groups to ask people why they had attended, which I hadn't done, so I added this to the topic guide by way of an Introduction. I outline the Topic Guide used in Table F below. Note that in Topic Two people were asked to think about their selected images that represented their careers beforehand. The topic guide is also further illustrated in Appendix J.

Table F: Focus group topic guide

Introduction	Motivation for coming	Why had people come to the focus group
Topic One	Concepts of class	What sort of criteria did people use to understand class? How might they define their own or other peoples?
Topic Two	Museum careers	Describing museum career paths; motivations, challenges, benefits and journeys Using museum objects to talk about career
Topic Three	Mapping positions	Joint exercise: placing positions and types of museum & collection on dimensions of high or low status
Topic Four	Classism	Stories or accounts of classism
Topic Five	Solutions to inequality	Ideas for addressing the issues discussed

In Topic Three I conducted a joint exercise. This specifically focussed on the way institutional and occupational hierarchies were constructed in the field. I prepared a flipchart with a scale drawn vertically - with high status at the top, mid status and low status at the bottom. I also prepared a number of post-it notes with names of occupational roles on one colour, and types of museum and collection on another colour. The group were asked to discuss and place occupational roles along the dimension and then follow this with placing museums and collections. I chose these occupational roles and museum/collection types on the basis of the phase one data, but each group was also invited to add in any occupational roles or museum types they felt had been overlooked (and which I could then build on for subsequent focus groups). Participants were briefed that this was to place according to how much status they would have on their CV, not how much status they would like them to have. They were then invited to reflect on this and consider how people could cross from one role to the other, what might be the barriers and how might this relate to class, or classed inequality.

In Topic Four, I asked people to provide any examples of classism they had encountered or experienced. And in the final Topic I asked people to think about the potential solutions to these issues, as well as feedback on their experience of participating.

4.3.3) Phase three: individual interviews

The aim of this phase was to explore how people constructed their own class background, understanding of the field and career narrative. It primarily offered people the opportunity to take part in a more private setting than that of a focus group discussion, and also offered flexibility for people to take part as and how they wanted.

Sampling and recruitment

The criteria for taking part was the same as phase two, that a person had to have worked or volunteered for the UK museum field. Recruitment for phase three took place at the same time as phase two between April to August 2018, offering people the chance to take part in either. I thus used the same website and promotional techniques as for phase two (museum related networks, twitter, linked in, Facebook groups).

I offered people a choice of taking part in either a face-to-face interview; a Skype interview; a telephone interview or an email interview. The versatility of this design allowed me to reach people in different locations, at different times, with different degrees of their and my own time or expense required. It gave people some control over how they participated. Whilst initially the task of explaining this design seemed complex, in fact it was quite straightforward. I directed most communication to the Take Part page of my website, and people then could opt for a focus group or an interview. When they wanted an interview, I would communicate with them via email to agree how this could best be done. See Appendix K for the Phase Three information sheet.

As with phase two, the response was bigger than anticipated. Overall, I completed 57 interviews as outlined above (Table G) and see also Appendix L for a break-down by occupational role. I found also that people had a very positive response to taking part welcoming the opportunity to have a space to reflect, a voice and someone to listen. From the Table below one can see that email interviews were most popular, potentially because this offered greater flexibility of when it could be completed for both me and the participant.

Table G: Participation in interviews

Face to face	13
Skype	2
Telephone	6
Email	36

The research process

The whole process required careful management of my communication with participants, both administratively and ethically. Participants were briefed and given a Consent form (see Appendix M). I created a register which I kept on a password protected computer, and from which I could log the initials of the participant; their dates of communication and preferred interview type.

For face to face, Skype and telephone interviews these questions are asked synchronously. For email interviews, I sent questions in one email and participants answered in their own time. I followed up each interviewee within a fortnight to see how they were getting on, offering help and the opportunity to participate in a different format (e.g. by phone) if they preferred. For each completed interview, the recording or email response was transferred to a separate file on a password protected computer.

For all interviews I asked people to describe their background; talk about the work they did (or had done) in museums; what they did (or had done in museums); their journey from early background to now; barriers and facilitators; how class had played a role; how they perceived role status in the field; how class background related to the structure of the field; personal experiences of classism and thoughts on how classed inequality could be addressed (see also Appendix N). As with phase two, I also asked people to suggest a museum object that would represent their career and explain why.

As mentioned above the style and nature of each interaction (face to face, Skype, phone or email) produces a different experience for the participant and researcher. I can only reflect on my own experience as a researcher. I found that phone interviews in particular offered the most productive dynamic, potentially as they offer the opportunity to

balance rapport with somewhere to hide! Both face to face and Skype interviews required more 'work' from me to set up and manage rapport and deal with the 'unsaid' power dynamics of the interview situation (Cassell, 2005). Skype also requires the ability to manage technology which may not be something all participants can do.

There was also a significant difference between email and other types of interviews. These are asynchronous, which can be both an advantage and disadvantage. From a participant perspective the email interview process offers time to reflect and also space to craft their own narrative, as well as flexibility of when and where they participate. However, it does require more time from them. And for the interviewer, it can mean constructions come ready-made, without the opportunity to engage in a conversation, and hence clarify or follow up areas. Of course, follow up is possible (Meho, 2006), but arguably limited given the work the time the participant has already contributed.

Summary

The section above describes in detail how the data was collected according to each phase. Overall the three phases yielded a significant amount of data and also substantial interest from participants. This has both advantages and disadvantages, particularly when it comes to data analysis, which I turn to next.

4.4) Research process; data analysis

I have already discussed how the research adopted Fairclough (1992)'s model as the basis for analysis. Here I describe how I developed this toolkit and applied my own analytical process to manage the data collected above. Discourse analysis does not necessarily follow a neat, ordered process in spite of models (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002; Whiting, 2012), so I explain these processes in some detail. This is also important in terms of other researchers being able to follow and evaluate my analysis (see also 4.2.5, *A Note on Evaluation*).

4.4.1) Developing the toolkit

As outlined above in *A critical discursive approach* (4.1.3), the analytical toolkit is based on Fairclough's (1992) three stage model combined with Bourdieu's theory. See also Diagram A. However I did not use all of, or only, these concepts and ideas. The

development of the toolkit was very much an iterative process, and I borrowed and "tried out" concepts and analytical devices from other researchers. In particular, Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) advice to get an overall impression of the material before selecting specific texts for more detailed analysis; examining ideas with an anthropological mindset (see 4.2.2 above) and trying out techniques such as substitution (of words) to draw out assumptions and differences. I also followed their general advice in attempting to delimit discourses as hegemonic, contested and taken-for-granted, hence it was also important to consider what was not said as well as what was not.

Because of the systematic, thorough and hence time-consuming nature of Fairclough's (1992) model, which can arguably be applied only on a small dataset, I developed a process similar to that of template analysis (King, 2012; King & Brooks, 2017) to extend this to a wider data set. Template analysis is a version of thematic analysis which enables a researcher to bring some structure to guide the research i.e. a template. The template can be developed from *a priori* concepts and theory, or entirely from empirical analysis, and is epistemologically flexible and iterative. Hence, the template is continually refined and developed as the analysis is also developed.

I thus borrowed from the iterative, top-down and bottom up idea of template analysis[8]. I adapted my analytic process by 'zooming in and zooming out' of the data. Hence, I focused on a small amount of data in detail (zooming in), developed a discourse 'hypothesis' (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002), and then tested this out on a larger amount of data (zooming out). I illustrate this diagrammatically below (Diagram B). I describe this process in detail below including giving an example of a discourse hypothesis (which became the discourse of *A collections meritocracy*; see Chapter Six). Whilst the term zooming in and zooming out has been used to describe an analysis of practice e.g. by zooming in on the action and zooming out to context (Nicolini, 2009), I adopt the term to explain how I managed the analysis of a large amount of data. This was an ongoing and iterative process and enabled me to apply the depth of Fairclough's textual analysis to a breadth of data.

[8] Although I borrowed from the broad approach of template analysis (King, 2012; King & Brooks, 2017) my aim was not to 'end up' with a detailed hierarchical coding frame that it often recommends. Rather it was to adopt its pragmatic approach to managing a top-down and bottom up analysis. However I did develop an initial coding template which I illustrate in Appendix O

Diagram B: Analytical process

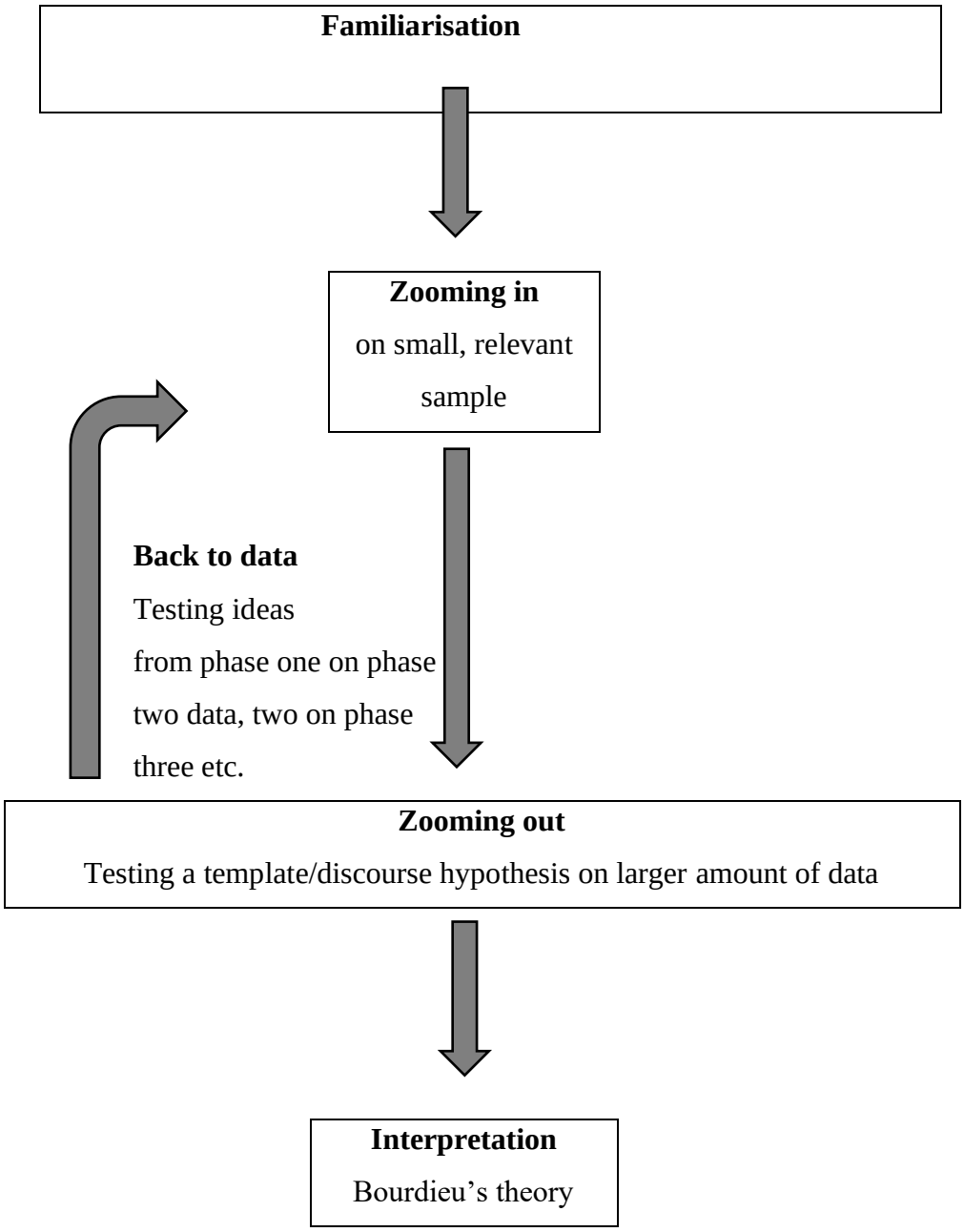


Table H: Analytical process in detail

Familiarisation	Listen and read text; make notes of initial thoughts Look for extracts of text relevant to RQs (field, museum, class, capital, career) Develop an initial coding framework to organise data and ideas (using the principles of template analysis (King, 2012; King & Brooks, 2017)
Zooming in Text based analysis	Pay attention to the language used as outlined in Fairclough's model (1992) e.g. prepositions; metaphors; equivalence; transitivity) Use techniques such as substitution to develop discourse hypotheses. (If one substituted class, career etc for another word, what would that tell us?)
Zooming in Discursive process analysis	What does the discursive process tell us? e.g. the event itself, how do people construct others as an audience such as telling of stories; laughter; assumptions. How are discourses deployed e.g. modality; hedges, presuppositions, argumentation, intertextuality used in representing positions? How are certain discourses – and speakers - legitimated, what is contested, taken for granted or even absent Developing a discourse hypothesis
Zooming out	Applying the detailed analysis on wider data set Let the data resist any hypothesis Writing up as part of the analysis

Interpretation Applying Bourdieu's theory	Describing the discourses shaping the field, career, class and classed inequality. How do these relate to capital and an ideal habitus? How is *discursive power* deployed and what are the effects? e.g. critically examining what is hegemonic (misrecognised); what is taken for granted (doxa) and what is contested (struggle) through questions such as: • Which positions have power over which discourses? • How are positions legitimated through discourses? • How are positions contested and struggled over? Writing up as part of the final analysis

4.4.2) Conducting the analysis

Here I provide a broad outline of how I analysed the data and provide examples to illustrate the way the toolkit above was applied. Whilst I started with the analysis of phase one data, then moved on to phase two and finally phase three, the process entailed zooming in and zooming out, going back to data analysed and developing ideas through an iterative process. I illustrate how I developed my analytical ideas and focus in particular on how I developed my analysis of the discourses constructing the museum field.

<u>Phase one data a) familiarisation</u>

For phase one data, each interview was transcribed, and I listened to the recording of each carefully, making notes of particular themes, questions and personal reflections on the interview as a discursive event. I also read the secondary data I collected and from both datasets noted initial observations and questions, adopting the anthropological mindset advocated by Jorgensen and Phillips (2002). I asked questions as to how the field was constructed (for example, Why are national museums, national?), noted "exaggerated detail" such as phrases that stood out (e.g. the psychological language of 'lived experience' and 'resilience' which were used across accounts) or examples of 'running out of words' (the difficulty one participant had in justifying why national museums should have more money). I also used substitution of words (e.g. ethnicity for

class which suggested that class could be more easily masked or made invisible). I developed a coding template from this data which I illustrate in Appendix O.

Phase one data b) zooming in

From the phase one dataset I selected a particular piece of data to focus on in-depth. This was *Working Class Heroes: social mobility in museums*, a video recording of a 60-minute debate from the Museums Association 2016 Conference, and a rare example of class being the subject of discussion in the field. The data was audio-recorded and professionally transcribed (by an external agency). I trialled elements of Fairclough's three stage model, with Bourdieu's theory, asking how field, career, class and classed inequality were constructed. In the first step, I identified examples of field, career, class, and classed inequality and looked at the vocabulary and grammar used to construct these. I noted how these were all constructed through the use of prepositions e.g. in/out, high/low, above/below, then/now etc, which implicated a broader social or temporal space structured hierarchically.

I then looked at the discursive processes, including the overall structure of the event, including who had voice; how arguments were justified and the speakers legitimated; either as an expert on class through the use of institutional capital (job title, years of experience); or via the authenticity of 'lived' experience (claims to a working class background). I noted how these voices and the discourse of social mobility framed the debate, shaping how class was then conceived (as origins and destination), and the way this made the 'working class hero' of the debate invisible (as everyone was "*now*" middle class). I also identified particular discourses by using the concept of inter-discursivity. I was struck by the language of '*lived experience', 'empathy' and 'people-centred recruitment'* which suggested to me a more psychological discourse, which initially seemed out of place in museums. I also noted how certain claims *("he had no heritage knowledge at all"*) were made in a way that cohered to a taken for granted understanding shared by a museum audience but not necessarily outsiders (i.e. that having heritage knowledge is a prerequisite for working in the field).

Phase one c) zooming out and testing a discourse hypothesis

From this analysis I developed the idea that boundaries and hierarchies were important analytic tools connecting the construction of field, career, and class (e.g. through

prepositions which constructed a role or a person as “different to” or “better than” something else). I focussed on the discourses underpinning them and developed a discourse hypothesis of the field being constructed as a *struggle* between *being special* and *being inclusive* underpinned by a more implicit epistemological struggle over expert knowledge and lived experience.

I wrote up these findings as a paper for a conference (EGOS 2018) and developed my thinking as part of the writing up process. I also tested and refined these ideas on the rest of the phase one data expanding the discourse hypothesis of the field to an idea of discursive ‘struggle’ without i.e. between museums and the market and an historical struggle within i.e. between exclusive and inclusive discourses.

Phase two data d) zooming in

I selected two focus group discussions to analyse in depth; a London based group and one in Manchester. I selected these because they were large groups and generated quite different discussions. Again, as with the phase one data, I applied Fairclough’s (1992) analysis looking at both the language and process by which hierarchies and class were constructed in the field. I noted in particular the discursive process by which national museums and curatorial positions were constructed as ‘the best’ – with very little disagreement and hence suggesting a hegemonic level of discursive power - and also noted the difference between institutions and individuals. I developed my coding template used above from phase one data, see Appendix P.

Phase two e) zooming out & testing a discourse hypothesis

I started to develop a hypothesis that hierarchies were constructed according to a *Distinguishing the field* discourse. Museums and occupational roles were valorised according to their ability to *Keep museums special.* I tested the discursive processes I had identified above on a further three focus group discussions (so five in total – London, Manchester, Bristol, Leeds, Wales). The constraints of time and money limited further analysis, and in fact the depth and breadth of the data was sufficient to gain a robust analysis. At this stage I also developed a greater level of interpretation, linking some of the discursive processes to Bourdieu’s theory and writing this up as a paper, which was eventually published. I thus developed the *Distinguishing the field* discourse

to show how it was also related to a *Disavowal of the market* and a discourse of *Recognition* (Evans et al., 2020).

Phase three data f): zooming in; zooming out

For phase three data I initially selected five email interviews to zoom in and analyse in-depth. I had by this stage a good working hypothesis of the construction of the museum field as a struggle between the market and inclusive-exclusive practice; as well as hierarchised according to field-level distinction. I wanted to gain a better understanding of the way career and class were constructed in participants personal accounts. I looked at the specific ways in which class was thus constructed and also gained an overall view of how the 'career' journey was also constructed. I noticed the way class was constructed as a story (i.e. a 'hardship narrative'). From this stage I developed the discourses outlined in Chapter Seven including a normative career by which an ideal habitus was constructed as one *Distinguished by Dedication* and *Enterprise*. I tested this on the other data from phase one and phase two relating to career as well as further data from phase three.

h) Final interpretation; zooming out on and testing on rest of data

The final stage of this lengthy and iterative process was writing up the finding chapters of the thesis, as well as the discussion section. This stage provided a structure to presenting the discursive processes, a way of thinking more critically about how they related to Bourdieu's theory or not and also ensuring they adequately addressed the aims and research question of the thesis. It also enabled a looking across and revisiting the data and a re-consideration of the discourses identified so far.

It was thus in this process that I nuanced the discourses and considered discursive power more substantively. Hence I noted how *A collections meritocracy* was used to legitimate the status and funding of national museums in a way that misrecognised the economic capital underpinning this. I also identified a broader discursive process of *Keeping museums special* which helped to frame the story overall and highlight how the discourse of career has discursive power over museum workers, keeping them entrapped in and complicit in the game. I also finalised the analysis as it is presented in the subsequent chapters. I summarise these final discourses in Appendix Q.

Summary

The development of the analytical toolkit and the analytical process were this iterative processes which I here describe in detail. My experience of doing this is that analysis does not necessarily end, but you move it to a place where it addresses the research question based upon a substantial theoretical, epistemological and methodological foundation. It is also substantially facilitated by discussing and writing up ideas and in Appendix R I outline the conferences and publications through which I disseminated my ideas and analysis with peers and practitioners. The findings are presented in the following three chapters.

4.5) Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the theoretical, epistemological and methodological principles framing the research design; explained the three phases of data collection and outlined the processes of developing an analytical toolkit and the steps I took to do this, both theoretical and practical. With reference to evaluation I have aimed to be transparent to the reader as to the choices I have made along the way.

I have explained the social constructionist epistemology underpinning the research; outlined my view of discourse and advocated the use of *discursive power* as an heuristic to connect the best of Bourdieu's theory on discourse with a discursive methodology. I then made a case for combining Bourdieu's theory with Fairclough (1992)'s model of critical discourse analysis. I outlined the methodological approach including a phased, iterative approach to the research design, an anthropological mindset to methods and data, the use of reflexivity and practical constraints. I then describe the three phases of data collection in detail and explain how I developed and deployed the analytical toolkit also in some detail. In the next three chapters I discuss the findings from this process.

Chapter Five: Distinguishing the field

In the last chapter I discussed the methodology employed to explore the research question for this thesis: *How do people who work in UK museums construct class and classed inequality in relation to their field and their career?* In the next three chapters I describe my findings in respect of this research question. In this Chapter I show how people in UK museums construct their field, focussing primarily on the way it is distinguished from other fields. In Chapter Six, I explore how distinctions are constructed within the field and in Chapter Seven, I look at how career is constructed. For each chapter I consider how class and classed inequality are constructed in relation to these discursive processes.

My key argument in this chapter is that the museum field is constructed through a struggle without e.g. between 'the market' and the state, and through a struggle within e.g. between an older, more exclusive practice and a newer focus on inclusivity. This struggle could be described as an unspoken (and hence doxic) campaign to *Keep museums special*. Generic discourses of class (e.g. as labour market position) are constructed as confusing. However, when discussed within the frame of the field, class and classed inequality are easier to see (e.g. as institutional type or role). Underpinning these struggles is the question of discursive power, which discourse or version of class has most influence and why. These arguments pave the way for a more in-depth examination of the discourses shaping the field in the following two chapters.

This chapter is arranged as follows. In *Situating the research* (5.1): I provide some contextual data and outline some analytical tools which situates the research for all three chapters. I describe these here to help orientate the reader. In *Keeping museums special* (5.2): I describe the key discursive co-ordinates through which participants constructed the distinction of the museum field. And in *Classing and class in the museum field* (5.3): I explore how class and classed inequality are constructed in relation to the field.

5.1) Situating the research

In keeping with a social constructionist epistemology, I describe the context within which the data was collected. I also explain how boundaries and hierarchies, which

were identified early on in the analysis, became important empirical and analytical tools for the whole research project.

5.1.1) Contextualising the field

The UK museum field that I researched was situated in a particular place in time. Specifically my data collection started in March 2017, shortly after the Brexit referendum in the UK and almost a decade into a Conservative government's (2010-now) pursual of austerity policies which aimed to massively curb public funding. My data analysis and writing-up were completed shortly after the election of Boris Johnson in November 2019, when a Brexit of sorts was achieved (the UK left the EU on January 31st 2020) and just at the time COVID-19 appeared and changed everything. These events contributed to not only a volatile economic and political climate, but also a changing discursive context too. Before 2010 in the UK, austerity was associated with WW2, Brexit was unheard of, and the word "pandemic" might make one think of Hollywood rather than an everyday teatime press briefing. The COVID-19 pandemic in particular, whilst it did not affect the actual data I had already collected, showed how new discourses were entirely possible (the UK Conservative government paying for people 'not' to work; a re-appraisal of low-paid work such as delivery drivers and supermarket checkout operators as "essential") even if temporary, and hence illustrate a key point of my thesis. That discourse, here shaped by context, matters.

For those working in museums, the main concern (at the time data was collected between March 2017 and August 2018) was one of funding. This was augmented by a longer-term process of marketisation. These changes are illustrated in Table I. Participants described a scenario where funding to museums under the UK Conservative government's austerity programme (2010 to 2019[9]), had significantly reduced. These cuts followed a time of expansion, under the UK New Labour administration (1997-2010) which had increased funding to museums, particularly to reach and diversify new audiences and further education and social impact agendas (Belfiore, 2020) (see Chapter Three). The field was thus seen to be in decline.

[9] The UK Conservative Government led by Prime Minister David Cameron from 2010 to 2016 and Theresa May from 2017 to 2019, adopted policies to counter the effects of the Global Financial Recession

Table I: Contextualising the field

Immediate funding context	**Long term trends to professionalisation and marketisation**
The significant challenge is funding, so we're a sector that's in atrophy rather than growth (Interviewee, Museum Professional Body) *We are coming out of period of very relatively generous museum funding, at a time when the museum staffing levels have expanded over… the last 50 years fairly consistently and clearly that's levelling off, if not reversing now* (Interviewee Museum Membership Body) *Lots of local authority museums move to trust status … to generate revenue.* (Interviewee, Museum Professional Body) *Museums do need to increase and diversify their income further. This will enable them to build sustainable and resilient models.* (Mendoza, 2017, p. 9) *What our members are facing with privatisation, is in fact a deletion of their terms and conditions. And this is what's*	*[…] It's particularly noticeable in creative jobs as they've become credentialised. So, the kind of classic example of this is something like journalism which was essentially a kind of trade … run by a series of apprenticeships and now it's very much a Master's Degree from specific, mainly London, institutions that kind of gets you into this sector.* (Speaker, MA Conference Debate) *Lots of exhibition assistant jobs where they require a Masters or a PhD …when really, they just need somebody who can be handy with tools and make mounts and, you know, place objects in their cases really.* (Speaker, MA Conference Debate)

from 2007, which focussed on reducing public spending in all areas. This was coined "austerity" by the Chancellor George Osborne.

happening across the whole sector, because museums have got to save money. (Interviewee, Trade Union)	

The reduction in funding from the UK government was accompanied by material and discursive effects, as outlined in Table I. Materially, participants blamed funding cuts for redundancies, outsourcing of staff in the bigger museums, and even some closures of the smaller museums. Participants described a field in which there were fewer jobs and many of the jobs available were offered on short-term contracts, based on short-term funding. Alongside this, participants described a discursive climate in which museums were being encouraged to be "resilient" and "enterprising" particularly by those cutting the funding i.e. government (as evidenced in the Mendoza, 2017 review of museums); some local authority museums were becoming "independent" from local authority setting up as trusts, enabling them to be more entrepreneurial and leadership courses were springing up to encourage museum Directors and Trustees to "change" their culture and find new funding sources.

Alongside the more immediate challenge of funding cuts, participants also described a longer-term process of marketisation and managerialism. This too is illustrated in Table I above. Museums were described as having shifted away from a focus on objects, for the benefit of an exclusive few, to a broadening out of their audience base. This was sometimes presented as a democratisation of museums, rather than a drive for profit, creating nuanced tensions around the role of museums, which I discuss further in 5.2. It was also seen by some participants to be encouraged by a political and discursive climate in which museum funding was subject to greater scrutiny and accountability, with museums having to demonstrate their value to funders. Sometimes this was associated with government policy, the enterprise culture of the UK Conservative government (1979-1997), arguably continued by New Labour (1997-2010) albeit with a social rather than economic dimension (as discussed in Chapter Three). The influence of government and the push to become more market-focussed and managerial was a key tension shaping the field, and one I explore in 5.2. And in Chapter Six, I show how

"marketisation" was re-articulated as a *Market for recognition* by which profile, as opposed to profit, became a legitimate competitive pursuit. It was a climate in which national museums were seen to do better than most, able to compete more successfully for visitor figures, media profile, corporate support and wealthy Trustees and benefactors.

The increasing marketisation of museums and the economy in general, some participants argued, generated an increased interest in museums as a career. This had enabled and encouraged by an expansion of the university sector in the UK with more graduates entering the job market looking for interesting careers, including the proliferation of postgraduate museum studies courses in the UK. One participant noted there were now 62 Museum Studies courses. Under New Labour, this was seen to be supported by an expansion and diversification of jobs within the field. Participants also talked of how an increasing demand for museum jobs was accompanied by a decrease in actual jobs due to funding constraints. This led to an increasingly competitive field and a shift in the power dynamic between employer and employee. Goalposts were shifted so that increasingly a University degree was not seen as sufficient for entry to curatorial roles, whilst increasingly precarious funding sources legitimated precarious short-term employment contracts. Within this context, pursuing a museum career was described as precarious, competitive and tough. I explore these issues further in Chapter Seven.

The context in which UK museums operated then was one of flux, with increasing competition for funding and jobs. The brief depiction above, suggests a particular positioning for UK museums, as a funded field and as an employer. As a field UK museums are, or have been, particularly reliant on government for funding and hence are (or have been) subject to government influence, however contested or arms-length. At the other end UK museums have become an increasingly attractive, and hence competitive, career option, hence the museum as employer has somewhat greater leverage than their potential employer. These contextual dynamics framed two particular discursive dynamics, which I turn to in the next section. Before I do I first outline some further characteristics of the field.

5.1.2) Processes of distinction

Very early on in my data collection, I noted that participants constructed the field of museum work as a highly differentiated and hierarchised space. Interviewees in Phase One talked about there being salient distinctions between museums; between art and history, national and local and as large or small organisations; as well as occupational roles; between conservators and curators for example, learning staff and curatorial, marketing and digital and front and back of house; as illustrated below.

> *It is quite rare for people to move from front-of-house to back-of-house functions. Not unheard of but rare. There are all sorts of other fault lines as well…traditionally between learning staff who were seen as not as important as curatorial staff, and often weren't allowed to use the collections. So, they would have their own separate handling collections. I think those views are being challenged and museums are becoming perhaps a bit less hierarchical than they used to be but, you know*…(Interviewee, Museum Membership Body)

These "*fault-lines"* or boundaries were indicative not only of difference, but also of the hierarchies within the field, suggesting that some work had greater status, power and was also less accessible than other work. Hence the speaker above constructs "back-of-house" work as more attractive but difficult to attain than "front-of-house"; curatorial roles are allowed to access the collections, whilst learning roles aren't. This implicit hierarchy enabled me to infer how distinction is thus constructed within the field. Thus in the example above the speaker indicates that the greater the proximity to a collection the greater the distinction of the role.

Paying attention to the way in which boundaries and hierarchies were deployed as distinguishing processes thus formed an important part of my research process. As detailed in the Methods Chapter, I drew on this theme empirically in Phases Two and Three, asking focus group and interview participants to construct, discuss and reflect on the positions of different types of occupational role and museum within the field. As well as this explicit invitation to construct the space, I also analysed the more implicit use of boundaries and hierarchies through a close examination of their discursive formation. Boundaries were detectable through the use of often binary, language such as '*are/are not' 'front/back of house', 'insider/outsider'* and use of prepositions such as '*in/out'* and '*as opposed to'*. They often set up an oppositional dimension, defining an object or subject within the field (i.e. museum, job, practice) by virtue of what it was

not. Hierarchies were detected through language such as the prepositions, *high or low income, win big, upper echelon jobs*, and also invoking the language of hierarchy (and organization) such as *leadership, seniority*. They were deployed to make valorised distinctions postioning objects and subjects (i.e. museum, job, practice) as superior or inferior to others. The language of boundaries and hierarchies was used not just spatially, differentiating particular positions in relation to other positions, but also temporally, valuing particular positions now in relation those of the past.

The way in which boundaries were deployed was particularly valuable in respect of exploring how the museum field was constructed. Boundaries highlighted how participants drew their own distinctions around museums as a field; between museums, the market and the state; past and present practices; different types of knowledge; and also between professional and public. These edges were under constant negotiation, reflecting Bourdieu's own argument that a field is not a fixed structure, but a relational one; and that fields are constructed both as a social space, in relation to external fields and discourses, and as an historical space, in relation to past discursive struggles (Bourdieu, 1989, 1993). By paying attention to these, I drew out two discursive co-ordinates which shaped how participants constructed their field, and I explore these more fully in the next section 5.2) *Keeping museums special.*

Paying attention to hierarchies was important for understanding distinctions within the field; how museums and occupational roles were positioned and on what basis. Analysing the way these were constructed and deployed enabled me to identify the discourses through which museum work was thus distinguished and classed, including *A collections meritocracy, Distinguishing knowledge* and a *Market for recognition* which I discuss further in Chapter Six.

And analysing the intersection of both boundaries and hierarchies, enabled me to depict how the museum career was constructed. The career was both shaped by boundaries and hierarchies which valorised particular ways of having (capital) and being (ideal habitus). It was also shaping of boundaries and hierarchies e.g. constructing boundaries between types of role, constructing some roles as 'out of reach' and reinforcing the hierarchies in the field. I discuss these further in Chapter Seven.

5.2) Keeping museums special (part one)[10]

I describe here how the museum field was constructed by participants as an ongoing struggle between two discursive co-ordinates; the first between *The market or the state* (5.2.1) and the second between *Exclusive or inclusive practice* (5.2.2). Whilst the former describes how museums are positioned in relation to external discourses, and in particular those related to money, the latter describes an internal struggle around 'good' museum practice. At their heart I argue is the struggle to retain a distinction of the field itself - to *Keep museums special,* as well as the discursive power to define that distinction - balanced with the need for museums to secure an economic base.

5.2.1) The market or the state

The construction of the museum field through a disavowal of 'the market' was a salient process of distinction. Most participants who mentioned this (and much of the data comes from phase one where participants were asked about challenges facing the field), do so to take a strong stance. They position museums clearly in opposition to a market-driven logic, constructing them as organisations somewhat above or beyond a focus on profit, targets or generating income. The strength of this opposition is framed by it being constructed as an imposition, a demand from an unarticulated 'other'. Whilst a market-discourse was resisted, the discourses of public funding bodies, including the government, were constructed as more acceptable. The tension between the market or the state not only underpins questions of who funds museums, it also raises questions of who museums are for. Furthermore the opposition to the market, did not shape all museum functions, most notably the recruitment of staff. Here the language and practices of a competitive market dictated. I expand on these issues below.

As noted, the market-driven discourse was mostly deployed by participants to resist a view of what museums were not. For the most part, this was a reaction to the currency and top-down nature of this discourse. As described in 5.1, museums were being asked to be more entrepreneurial by the government. The Mendoza Report of 2017, a review of government policy for museums, argued that museums need to be "resilient" (Mendoza, 2017, p. 9) and find new business models (in spite of also claiming that funding cuts were not so drastic). This ask to generate income and adopt market-

[10] Part two is Chapter eight (8.1)

focussed practices was thus cast as an ideological drive, associated with current political practices and resisted as such.

> *Certainly what's changed massively is the focus on generating our own income... so everybody is now supposed to think in those terms. This detracts from the real role of museums. And so they've got a number of real roles, which is for me about education, helping people to understand the past, preserving object of the past. How does this relate to our current identities? And yes, so when we become businesses… we're not businesses, we are public services.* (Interviewee, Trade Union)

The speaker here constructs the focus on generating income as a significant imposition on all museum workers ("*everybody is now supposed to think in those terms*"), as well undermining the function of museums *("detracts from the real role of museums").* They resist this, constructing a clear opposition to the market *("we're not businesses; we're public services*"). However, despite the certainty of this opposition, the position of what museums are is less distinct. The speaker uses less definitive language when constructing the real role - hedged ("*which is for me about*") and presented as an eclectic mixture of education, preservation, and related to identity.

The market-driven discourse was also resisted by constructing museums as superior to businesses; in practice and in principle. This was achieved by invoking a particular character to museums - stable, responsible and ethical:

> *I think that when the financial crash happened and when budgets were tightened; there was this bizarre move to businify museum and cultural provision. This was ironic because that was the thing that had caused the problems in the first place. And there was this great debate … this argument that businesses normally last, on average, 30 years…. and …that museums have lasted, hundreds and hundreds of years.* (Interviewee, Museum Specialist Group)

This extract constructs a clear distinction between museums; which are durable ("*lasted hundreds and hundreds of years*") and businesses, which are short lived ("*last, on average 30 years"*), and presented as unstable and irresponsible (*"that had caused all the problems in the first place"*). The speaker thus implies that museums **are** stable and responsible. The extract below amplifies this character, invoking a higher ethical plane to museum work:

> *I know that museums have to work within the constraints of the day, but I would say that if you do just follow, you know, numbers and the kind of financial things it can lead you into unethical practices. And so there is, there are museums that get pulled fully in that direction I suppose. So numbers, kind of, money, that kind of thing, the... Yes, the sort of business sustainability resilience side of it, it's endless.* (Interviewee, University Department)

Here, the speaker constructs a market logic (*"the kind of financial things", "money, that kind of thing"*) as unethical. That some museums may follow this logic is constructed as an imposition *("constraints of the day", "pulled fully in that direction" "its endless"),* implying that this is coming from outside the field, and hence not intrinsic to the practice of museums. The speaker also constructs market logic as an epistemological concern i.e. that the value of museums can be counted objectively ("*numbers", "kind of money"*), implying this is a less valuable way to 'know' what a museum is or does.

However, this strong opposition to market logic obscures a pragmatic reality, that museums need funding from somewhere and are therefore not totally autonomous. Resisting the market then potentially lends discursive power to other funding bodies – the government (national or local), charitable funding bodies, corporate donors or the wealthy. To secure economic capital museums must re-articulate a discursive logic that suits funder needs. However, for certain funders, this was seen to compromise the autonomy and taint the 'ethical high-ground' of museums:

> *The [name of national museum] is still sponsored by BP. There are regular protests from different groups against that. And they have unveiled really worrying conflict of interest that are you know growing between those corporation and the museums.* (Interviewee, Trade Union)

This extract illustrates this conundrum. By accepting money from a controversial company the museum here risks losing public good will ("*regular protests"*) as well as compromising a good name ("*worrying conflict of interest*"). The objection here is explicit and indeed, the role of corporate sponsors and museum became a very public debate in the UK (and US) during 2018-9[11]. What it illustrates here is that taking a,

[11] In 2019, the National Portrait Gallery turned down £1million from the Sackler family due to their involvement with controversial Purdue Pharma. Public and media pressure intensified for other museums to reassess relationships with big business, including British Petroleum https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/mar/19/national-portrait-gallery-turns-down-grant-from-sackler-family-oxycontin

sometimes ethical, stance against the market, of not being a 'business' does not necessarily equate to autonomy. Rather museums compromise some of their discursive power, allowing elements of their '*real roles'* (Interviewee, Trade Union) to be shaped by those with money.

The power of funders to discursively shape the '*real roles*' of museums - as opposed to the market - was not always objected to, particularly when associated with public service agendas. As noted in 5.1, museums had increasingly been called upon to demonstrate their value or 'return on investment' to government funding bodies, economically and socially (see also Chapter Three). This led to an instrumentalising of museums, a positioning of their value within other publicly funded agendas. This was evident in my data, as illustrated below:

> *I used to drive past the (Name of Hospital] thinking well I'm not a nurse, I'm not a doctor, I'm not somebody who's saving someone's life every day, and it took me a long time to realise that actually what I do is just as important because we enrich people's lives. All that enrichment is just as important to people's health and wellbeing and all of that stuff, as somebody who is a doctor. That's how I justify what I do.* (Focus group participant, Bristol)

The speaker (from a local authority museum) locates the value of museums within a public service (a hospital) sphere. They use a health and wellbeing discourse to position museums as equal to the work of doctors and nurses. They acknowledge this is a discursive resource explicitly (*"that's how I justify what I do"*), and more implicitly ("*and all that stuff*"), and a discourse that has potentially taken time to bed in ("*it took me a long time to realise*"). That they feel the need to justify what they do indicates a position of poor relation for the museum, in a space here predominated by more influential others i.e. hospitals. It is interesting that this speaker has worked for a local authority museum, where the competition for funding between museums and other services has been most intense (Hadley & Gray, 2017; Rex, 2020)

This need to 'justify' value to publicly funded agendas can also be seen in the policy campaign of the Museums Association (MA) - *Museums Changes Lives.* This was presented on the website as an ongoing campaign to encourage museums to contribute to social issues such as poverty and intolerance. Whilst this may be constructed as having a value in itself (in positioning museums as 'inclusive', see also 5.2.2) it is also

underpinned by a more pragmatic intent i.e. to "*underline the importance of continuing public investment*" (MA Website, 2020). This illustrates, what Belfiore, (2020) has called, the need for museums (and culture more generally) to 'make a case' to funders. It highlights that whilst the logic of the market is resisted, the logic of public funding bodies has an almost taken-for-granted influence, here presented on the website of the field's professional association.

Resistance to the market was also not applied to every dimension of museum practice, in particular that of recruiting, managing or developing staff. In the example below the language and logic of the market was deployed much more pragmatically:

> *(That) means that actually you know if we've only ten quid I'm going to have to go with the person that's got the masters and the PhD, not the person that just really wants to work in a museums and I think that's a reasonable business decision because we're having to operate as businesses***.** (Interviewee, Professional Body)

Here the speaker legitimates the recruitment decisions of a museum within the context of the funding crises *("only got ten quid"*), and in a climate in which they are being asked to adopt new market-orientated models *("having to operate as businesses").* Hence they can use the logic of the market ("*a reasonable business decision*") and chose someone with lots of cultural capital *("the masters and the PhD")* over someone with motivation ("*just wants to really work in museums*"). It hints at the taken-for-granted power of the employer or recruiter over the employee, or potential employee, and also suggests the anti-market discourse is a somewhat flexible one.

The discussion above highlights that resisting the market is an important discourse when it comes to distinguishing the museum field. However, in doing so it leaves open the question of what discourse do museums follow. This is a discursive space that those with money are able to fill, whether as wealthy donors, companies, charitable bodies, or the government itself. Above I highlight that some funder agendas are openly contested – controversial corporate sponsorship for example. But some funders agendas – i.e. public funding from local and central government - are openly championed (as in the case of the professional body's campaign). And whilst museums as institutions may quite publicly resist being driven by the market; the museum worker as an individual job seeker has no such choice. It thus points to a more taken-for-granted distinction

between the employer and the employee; with the former possessing a greater amount of material and discursive power over the latter.

5.2.2) Exclusive or inclusive practice

A second discursive co-ordinate was around the question of who museums were for, sometimes depicted as a museological struggle over exclusive or inclusive museum practice. Exclusive practice was depicted as a connoisseurly approach, with a focus on the interests of other experts, and privileging object-based and technical expertise. Inclusivity was constructed as a focus on the public as audiences, co-curators and even beneficiaries; and privileged stories and lived experience as a basis of knowing and showing. Whilst exclusivity was constructed as a somewhat traditional approach to museum practice; inclusivity was more contemporary (as represented in the professional body's campaign – *Museums Change Lives* – as mentioned above). Whilst inclusivity had a celebrated currency, it was also a potential threat to that which made the field - and those that work in it – distinctive. Hence it was resisted, often implicitly, through the use of nuanced distinctions e.g. collection-based practice versus non collection-based practice; professional versus non-professional, raising questions not just of who museums are for, but who knows best. I expand on these below.

The exclusive versus inclusive co-ordinate was depicted as a progressive trajectory from an older, object-focussed practice to a newer focus on audiences. The participants that talked about it, described a journey in which museums and museum practitioners were moving away from offering highly specialist and technical displays for the benefit of an 'expert and specialist few' to more determined efforts to 'engage' with the public.

> *I can see museums doing things differently because of all that research and thinking that's come out of the field … that bigger, deeper understanding, which has moved us away from being a narrow profession of kind of curators and conservators that are trained in traditional disciplines and, again, it's a caricature but create output for their peers, and we now see, in all kinds of museums, a much broader range of roles, including people who are advocates for audience (*Interviewee, University Department)

Here the speaker constructs a clear distinction between an older, exclusive focus which is self-referential ("*narrow profession"; "traditional disciplines" "output for their*

peers") to a more inclusive one, which accommodates the needs of people outside the field, and also has effects for museum work (*"much broader range of roles" "advocates for audience"*). They construct this as a progression (*"moved us away from"*), which is the result of superior insight ("*bigger, deeper understanding"*) thus giving it authority over older forms of practice. The implication is of an almost naturalised progression, that simply by knowing more things *("all that research and thinking")* museums will be more inclusive, a progression which is also constructed as emanating from within the sector itself *("that's come out the field"*).

The distinction between exclusive and inclusive was also underpinned by distinctions between particular types of knowledge. The exclusive approach entailed connoisseurship; an in-depth knowing of the object; its make-up and maker (or artist), its style, and its provenance. By contrast the inclusive approach used objects to help tell a story and portray lived experience, particularly of everyday people. The former approach was more associated with particular disciplines, such as art, whilst the latter was connected to social history.

> *I think that the museums are moving from the sort of old idea of art object with a little label, and trying to you know work on how do we interpret this collection? How are we going to engage with the audiences? You know, it's less contemplative, and it's more participatory?* (Interviewee, Trade Union)

> *Social history […], so there was this big move that museums should tell the lives of ordinary people in a way that they conspicuously failed to do before then..... and she [a Director] was appointed specifically because the trustees wanted to move away from a very kind of military, technology heavy approach to an approach which was much more about the stories of the people … a much more people-based approach, (*Interviewee, Museum Membership Body).

These extracts illustrate these distinctions. The first extract contrasts an older approach where a particular artefact was left to speak for itself ("*an art object with a little label"*), and the visitor assumed to make their own intellectual interpretation (or be "*contemplative*"), to an approach where the attention of the visitor is sought, managed and potentially entertained (*"engage with the audiences"*). The second extract illustrates a similar trajectory from a focus on objects alone (*"military; technology heavy approach"*) to a more interpreted form of knowing ("*the stories of the people*" *"a*

much more-people based approach"). Both extracts suggest that a focus on objects alone is no longer a sufficient way of presenting knowledge ("*old idea*" "*trustees wanted to move away from"*) and frame this shift as a democratising one ("*more participatory" "tell the lives of ordinary people"*). However, whilst aiming to include the public as visitors and as part of the story, the arbitration of knowledge, as in who decides what gets shown and how, remains the responsibility and hence authority of the museum (i.e. as opposed to the public).

The celebrated trajectory towards a more inclusive practice was not without some challenge however. As described above, the professional body's campaign "*Museums Change Lives*" encouraged a positioning of museums as "*socially purposeful organisations*" (MA Website, 2020), offering resources and recognition to museums to address various social agendas e.g. health and wellbeing; poverty, discrimination. This thus shifts museums into a quasi, public-service/charitable space, and indeed many of the museums the MA recognises as 'changing lives' worked with charities and charitable funders. However, the speaker of this extract below expressed discomfort at this extension of the field's boundaries.

> *The Museums Change Lives thing … I've heard very powerful stories about people who have been given volunteering opportunities and really began to turn their lives around …(there's a) little bit of a danger sometimes … that lots of other charities or public organisations, can tell the same story. They don't always necessarily relate to the museum's collections and the stories that they tell* (Interviewee, Museum Membership Body)

The speaker suggests that moving too far towards an inclusive practice which focusses on the needs of people, without reference to that which makes museums distinctive (in this case "*the collections and the stories they tell*"), blurs the boundaries between museums and other fields which already do this sort of work ("*charities, public organisations*"). The speaker implies a check to being '*inclusive for inclusive's sake*' articulating a plea to *'keep museums special'* which they define as a focus on collections.

The 'check' on inclusivity outlined above was done so within a private interview setting so it is not clear how public this 'tension' is. However there were more nuanced examples of the 'struggle' particularly when it came to the museum worker, or at least

certain types of worker. Hence, the privileging of the needs of audiences and of "*lived experience*" as ways of knowing and showing, was sometimes constructed in opposition to curatorial practice and knowledge:

> *I am flag waving for the lovely curators, as a knowledge base sector, this is really critical, so we can't devalue their knowledge. I think there has been a real shift towards audiences so, collections people think they have a tiny, tiny small voice.* (Interviewee, Professional Body)

> *So we're bringing groups whose expertise around disability derives from lived experience but also it's a professional field that they work in. So these are disabled artists and activists who work with us, with curators, …to challenge entrenched negative attitudes towards disability…and so we found a really powerful way to bring those forms of expertise together. We're not putting one above the other, we're trying to put them together* …(Interviewee, University Department)

These extracts illustrate the ways in which a subtle distinction is deployed between certain types of museum work and non-museum workers. The first extract reasserts a particular distinction of the field ("*a knowledge-based sector"*), associating it with the knowledge of one occupational group ("*the curators"; "collections people"*) and disassociating it with the knowledge of audiences. Indeed, the shift to audiences is constructed as potentially diminishing the field and the role ("*devaluing their knowledge"; "a tiny, small voice")*. The second extract whilst arguing for the value of working with "lived experience" is careful to suggest that this doesn't undermine the knowledge of curators, both explicitly *("we're not putting [one form of expertise] above the other"*) but also implicitly by suggesting that the disabled artists and activist have other legitimate credentials *("but it's also a professional field they work in"*). The word professional is thus used to add value to the "lived experience" of people who come from outside the museum field. It also elevates the museum worker to a professional status alongside other professionals. It highlights the careful balancing act between "including" different types of knowledge, some of which may not be "professional", whilst retaining a distinctive value for and status of the particular knowledge of certain types of (mainly curatorial) museum work.

Distinction was further maintained through the positioning of the museum worker as part of the "included". Indeed, the museum workforce was relatively overlooked within discussions of inclusivity in favour of audiences outside. For example, in the policy document "*Creating Better Places to Live and Work*", (MA website, 2020) the focus was on developing practices which benefit the community outside rather than those within. And when participants did address issues of workforce inclusivity, the ultimate beneficiary was not necessarily the museum worker. In the MA Conference Debate on Social Mobility for example, not only were discourses of inclusivity and social mobility used interchangeably but the benefits were often described as one of attracting a more inclusive audience:

> *All of our below Grade 6 posts are open to any relevantly qualified candidate because the areas where we're not doing well are around engaging people who don't have degrees and don't habitually come to art galleries […] we […] were able to create a front facing team that look a bit like our city. And that's what will make the people of our city come in.* (Audience member, MA Conference Debate)

This extract illustrates this. It describes a strategy to enhance the inclusivity of the workforce (here reducing potential barriers in the form of qualifications), and also enhance its diversity (by creating a team that "*look a bit like our city*"). The benefits of this are described not in terms of the museum worker per se; but the potential museum visitor ("*people who don't habitually come to art galleries" "the people of our city"*). It thus represents a business case approach, seeing an inclusive workforce as ultimately good for attracting inclusive audiences. It is noteworthy also that whilst aiming to be inclusive and representative, this is not for all levels of the workforce. Grade 6 and above posts presumably still require a degree, and the people that "*look like the city*" are only in the "*front facing team*". It illustrates a perhaps taken-for-granted hierarchy in museum work, where some roles can be more accessible and exclusive than others, also hinted at in the paragraph above around curatorial knowledge. This is something I explore further in Chapter Six.

The discursive co-ordinate of exclusivity/inclusivity thus frames a careful, ongoing balancing act through which the distinction of the field is constructed. On the one hand, promoting an exclusive approach, was constructed as out of date, and by its nature, exclusionary. On the other hand being too inclusive challenged the distinctiveness of

museums as a field, and of the museum worker within. A distinctive positioning for the museum field was re-asserted by some participants, for example, through an emphasis on collections, and for the museum worker through the use of the term "professional". Furthermore, the focus of inclusive practice was very much on those outside the field rather than those working within, hence reinforcing distinctions between field and non-field, but also obscuring some of the distinctions within.

Summary

The two discursive co-ordinates illustrate how the museum field is constructed or *"kept special"* by participants, through discursive struggle; struggle from without in relation to other fields, and struggle from within in relation to its own history. These struggles are not un-related. The former, *the Market or the state*, relates to questions of how museums are funded, but also the question of discursive power. By resisting the market, museums are somewhat at the discursive mercy of funding bodies, including the government. The influence of these funding bodies can be detected within the second discursive co-ordinate, *Exclusive versus inclusive* practices. The shift to inclusivity, whilst constructed as a progressive trajectory emanating from within the field, also accords with making a case to fit into existing public service agendas e.g. to save or change lives. These tensions illustrate how the field is subtly shaped through ideology through the quite practical need to generate funding; from the previous focus of New Labour and social inclusion to the current (at the time) focus of the Conservative government on austerity, funding cuts and becoming more 'entrepreneurial'. There is also a more nuanced epistemological tension over what constitutes knowledge e.g. connoisseurship and technical expertise or stories and lived experience, and who has the discursive power to say, the museum worker or the museum visitor.

Within these processes the museum worker is often a 'poor relation' to the needs of *Keeping Museums Special*, if not overlooked entirely. Hence, the examples here illustrate that workers are legitimately subject to a market discourse where museums are not; whilst workers are also excluded from discussions of inclusivity. I return to these issues in Chapters Six and Seven.

5.3) Classing and class in the museum field

In this section I explore how people constructed class and classed inequality in relation to the museum field. In both focus groups and interviews I asked people to say how they might 'class' themselves or others. As a general construct, class was seen to be confusing. People used an array of proxies and detective work to identify class, seemingly certain that there was a thing to 'know', and yet unsure how to definitively know it. I argue that this confusion is, in part, due to class being constructed through different discourses. Class is a contextualised not an essentialised construct; shaped by and mutually reinforcing of what is valued within that context. Within this I show that discourses from without the field (e.g. class as economic, classed inequality as an issue of diversity) tend to confuse or obfuscate class. Discourses deployed within the field however (e.g. institutional status, regional identity) made class more visible.

I expand on and illustrate these points as follows: in 5.3.1) *Classing struggles:* I focus on class and classed inequality as general constructs. I show how class is deployed in two ways; as a form of describing social difference, and as a way to describe inequality. I show how these are shaped by and shaping of a broader discursive context and also by discursive power i.e. the processes used to legitimate a particular way of knowing class. In 5.3.2) *Classing the museum field:* I explore these processes in the context of the museum field; looking at how people 'know' the class of their field, using expert and everyday claims. In 5.3.3) *Class in the museum field*; *the research context:* I explore how class and classed inequality are constructed, illustrating how the research context made certain versions of class more visible.

5.3.1) Classing struggles

In both focus groups and interviews I asked people to talk about how they 'know' class. Participants used a wide array of proxies to indicate class – occupation, wealth, education, lifestyle and accent. Participants were often uncertain about how to class, and indeed for each claim to 'know' class, a counter-claim suggested this was not the whole story. For example, one participant claimed going to public school was a sure-fire way to identify privilege, whilst another said they had been via a scholarship and didn't come from money. And whilst a participant in the Manchester focus group presumed,

"*You can hear my accent, its Northern and common*", as someone not from Manchester, I couldn't hear that this was "*common*". These examples illustrate that classing is an inexact process, that proxies do not tell the whole story and often a fuller analysis of context is required i.e. family background in the first and regional accents in the second. It also raises the question of what are people doing when they class? In my analysis below I argue that class is deployed for two reasons, to socially differentiate and to construct inequality. Both these processes are constituted by, and constitutive of, a broader discursive context.

As noted above, class was talked about in two ways: the first was as a way to describe social differentiation. Class was deployed to describe social difference through the construction of structure (e.g. "*the haves and have nots" "three classes*"), through position within that structure ("*the establishment" "the working class"*), and as a way of ascribing value to these positions (e.g. *"my accent is common" "posh background"*). These constructions of class were fluid and changeable, dependent for meaning on particular discursive contexts e.g. time and place, and hence appear not as consistent but unstable and confusing. The following extracts illustrate this fluidity:

> *Particularly since Thatcher I suppose, class has become so complicated now. I now meet lots and lots of very rich people who […] don't come from posh backgrounds. And of course, there's aristocrats as well who have money for generations, all mixed up with them. It's no longer like the 1950s version …where there's just really three classes, and it's all very simple. (*Focus group participant, London)

> *We're … becoming a system much more like America where even though it is classless society you still need money and a significant amount of it to get any sort of education and find your way, a foot in the door. (*Speaker, MA Conference Debate)

At first glance these extracts may seem contradictory, as the construct of class is associated with money in the first ("*lots of rich people*") and disassociated from money in the second *("even though its classless you still need money"*). Arguably they can be seen to be framing class within two different discourses. The first is one in which class, as social position and also money, is largely inherited ("*posh background", "money for generations"*), a structure definitive of 1950s's Britain ("*three classes*"), blurred since

Thatcher ("*all mixed up*") and absent in America ("*classless society*"). This historic version of class vies with a second discourse – neoliberal, entrepreneurial and individualised (perhaps imported from the US via Thatcher) in which class as inherited social identity is diminished, anyone can ostensibly get rich, and indeed it is money, rather than class, that talks ("*need money and a significant amount of it"*). It illustrates how class as social difference is shaped by a broader discursive context.

The second way participants talked about class was as a form of inequality. Indeed, participants often conflated talk of 'class" with talk of classed inequality. This form of class was more certain than that above, but often based on assumptions - assumptions of who was at the bottom of a hierarchy, or outside a boundary. As can be seen below, the participant assumes that talk of class, is talk of the problem of class.

> *I have worked in Museums for 30 plus years and I have to say that people from a working-class background have been throughout that time, and still are, thin on the ground in specialist and management roles. Indeed, as a sector we have managed to avoid discussion of class as part of our make-up.* (Interviewee, Museum Director)

The problem of class here is constructed as one of "*working class*" people, accessing particular jobs, as well as a lack of recognition of this issue (*"we have managed to avoid discussion of class"*). The way the speaker constructs the problem of class is thus indicative of the hierarchy by which some jobs (i.e. "*specialist and management*") may be more valued within the museum field than others. It illustrates how talk of class as classed inequality reflects and can reinforce context. Both these forms of class – as social difference and as inequality - can thus be seen to be constituted by and constitutive of a broader discursive context.

Within these discursive frames, different forms of discursive power i.e. ways of legitimating knowledge of class, were also salient. Participants sometimes legitimated their knowing of class using the authority of official or more 'expert' versions;

> *I already know what class I am. I read an article in The Guardian years ago about… I think it did give me a term for it, I can't remember what it was. (*Focus group participant, Manchester).

> *I know that there are newer terms that have come out of the Great British Class Survey project, and in those terms I would fall under the 'precariat' label.* (Interviewee, Front of House Worker)

These speakers illustrate how discursive power, here attached to the media and academic research, is deployed in both naming and categorising class. The first speaker claims to 'know' their class even though they can't remember what it is called; having read it in a well-known broadsheet newspaper is sufficient. The second speaker uses a well-publicised class categorisation system (the "*Great British Class Survey project")* to 'know' their class position. These examples illustrate an epistemological claim that class can be known as an objectively defined, category. They also suggest that 'knowing' is not always a matter of seeing for yourself. It is a matter of trusting more authoritative, expert voices, or at least those with more discursive power. These expert voices also vied with, and were sometimes contested by everyday, subjective claims to know class.

> *I see myself as having working class roots just because I was brought up in that environment. ...I think it's a lot about how each individual person sees themselves, and that's very personal. You can't really almost, for me, quantify everyone with one label.* (Focus group participant, Wales)

> *My dad there's this … I work hard; I'm not a middle class la-di-dah; I don't prance around […] he has that kind of opinion of himself, even though he does work in an office and he has worked his way up the engineering levels […] there's that refusal to move up a class sometimes, I think.* (Focus group participant, Wales)

In the first extract the speaker draws on their lived experience to class themselves, or at least their background ("*working class roots*"). They see this as matter of personal choice, drawing on an individualised discourse ("*how each individual person sees themselves"*) and hence resisting an objective, externally imposed category. Likewise in the second extract, the speaker talks about how their dad, who on some terms is constructed as middle class ("*work in an office", "worked his way up the engineering levels"*) asserts their own identity ("*I'm not middle class*"), 'refusing' the class potentially imposed on them by others. Both these extracts illustrate an epistemological claim to class as rooted in subjective, lived experience, often based on the past rather than the present, and seen as a personal choice. There is thus a tension between different

ways of claiming class – authoritative or authentic, objective or subjective - tensions which echo the epistemological struggles within the field itself e.g. the privileging of objective, connoisseurship or subjective lived experience.

Class and classed inequality can thus be seen as contextualised constructs, shaped by and mutually reinforcing of a discursive context – at national and field level. They are also shaped by different levels of discursive power i.e. legitimated by the authority of expertise or authenticity of lived experience, claims which echo tensions within the museum field itself. It is to this that I now turn.

5.3.2) Classing the museum field

In this section I explore the discursive processes by which participants classed the museum field. As discussed in Chapter Two, occupation has long been used by class analysts as a tool to "measure" class. It was also used by participants to class the field and class themselves. Both 'expert' and everyday discourses of class (as described in 5.3.1 above) classed the museum field as "middle class", although the basis of these claims was somewhat limited. Expert claims drew on economic positioning, whilst everyday ones often drew on cultural portrayals, and both classed the field according to those in it (suggesting museums are middle class because middle class people work in them). I argue that a more in-depth examination of the museum field – the distinctions within and the way class is talked about – is required, something I explore in detail in Chapter Six.

As noted above, expert (or official) ways of classing an occupation, draw on economic discourses. Expert claims to class the field were few in my data, but a useful example was that of the MA Conference Debate on Social Mobility. Here the first speaker – an academic sociologist legitimated as an expert by the Chair of the Debate (e.g. "*Editor of" …"written several papers on inequality")* provided an account of how the field was classed:

> *The way that things like, the Labour Force Survey which is The Office of National Statistics picture of the British economy through its labour force… thinks about museums … is as essentially a kind of an upper echelon or a middle-class job. What this means is that although people's kind of origins in*

terms of class might be diverse. Once they end up in the museum sector they are broadly speaking part of the middle class. (Speaker, MA Conference Debate)

The speaker outlines how official, government schemas class museums – and hence those who work in them - as middle-class. It illustrates the predominance of an economic positioning used in classing a field ("*picture of the British economy through its labour force").* However, this is troubling for a field that both resists the language of the market, that is also struggling for funding, and where economic reward is not necessarily as high as other occupations. There is limited data on earnings in museum work, but the BOP Survey (2016) suggested that its respondents earnt less than comparably educated occupations[12]. Participants themselves also noted the tension when it came to classing themselves*;*

Our social lives and our job… might suggest that we're middle class. But our financial security and all of that kind of economic stuff: how much we get paid, the fact that we've got loans, all that sort of thing would suggest that we're working class. (Focus group participant, Wales)

I think working in museums probably automatically makes me a bit middle class now, even though I'm not paid that much. (Interviewee, Museum Officer)

These illustrate that whilst the field of museum work may be constructed as middle class, the economic benefits attached to it are not. Indeed, the first extract suggests these are a different class entirely ("*would suggest we're working class*"). This raises the question that if economic capital is not a basis for the field being middle-class, what is? Again, there is an almost taken-for-granted acceptance that working in museums is a middle-class thing to do. The extracts also illustrate how talk of class is also reflective of context – here, depicting a field where money is not explicitly valued.

An alternative discursive frame is that museums are classed as "middle class" because of their association with high levels of cultural capital, particularly institutional. This can be seen in terms of how such capital is valued within the field. The survey cited above (BOP Consulting, 2016) reported 88% of its respondents had a first degree and

[12] "*A small majority (55%) of the sector earns less than the UK average wage of £27,600 (2015). As this suggests, salary levels look relatively average overall but given their high levels of education, the museum workforce is paid on average lower than many other comparable sectors"* (BOP Consulting, 2016, p. 19)

59% a postgraduate degree, painting a picture of a highly qualified field. Educational capital was also seen to be a way of distinguishing the field, particularly in everyday clams:.

> *P1 I would define myself as working class, but then I have had people that say you're not working class you work in a museum.*
>
> *P2 Yes, yes. I've had somebody say you're a class traitor for working in a museum. … you're not of the streets anymore if you work in a museum. Because you're dealing with professor such and such a body or, oh yes you're going to get on telly soon.* (Focus group participants, Manchester)

This exchange illustrates how working in museums is seen within a more everyday discourse – automatically middle-class by dint of working in a museum, even if the individual claims to be working class. The person working in museums is classed through their association with highly educated people ("*professor such a body"*), or even better, may well be famous ("*on the telly soon*"), as opposed to being ordinary like everyone else *("of the streets"*). This "us and them" classification, depicts a field that is seen to be intellectual and glamorous, and distinctive as a result. It points to some of the field-level discourses (*Distinguishing knowledge* and *a Market for recognition*) though which museum work is constructed, and which I will explore in Chapter Six.

In both cases – expert and everyday - the classing of the field is somewhat circular and hence rather limited. In both versions, it seems as though the occupation classes the person, and the person (i.e. *"professor such a body"*) classes the field. It is a conflation of class as a familial marker and class as an occupational one and places a lot of expectation on "occupation" to class. Both tend to rely on proxies or assumptions, rather than an in-depth examination of the occupational practices, discourses and "struggles" that might contribute to how the field distinguishes itself. They are limited in thus understanding why the field might be "middle class", or why "middle-class people" are attracted to this work. Furthermore, such processes tend to homogenise the field, without giving due weight to the way distinction is constructed **within** the field. It is these issues to which I turn in Chapter Six. Before doing so however, I first consider how the research context itself is salient in revealing certain classing processes.

5.3.3) Class in the museum field; the research context

The research context is also important for understanding how class and classed inequality is constructed within the field. As described in Chapter Four, the data collection for this research took part iteratively, in three phases, the first phase informing the design of phase two and three. Each phase provided a slightly different way of seeing class. Phase one suggested that class had been somewhat overlooked. It was obscured by the way in which it was talked about, and I illustrate this below with particular reference to the MA Debate on Social Mobility. Conversely, in Phases Two and Three class was given particular form as a regional identity and personal story respectively. In spite of this there were voices that were consistently overlooked – that of people doing certain roles. I discuss these issues further below.

It was clear from Phase One data that class had been somewhat overlooked within the museum field, particularly in relation to the workforce. Interviewees were aware of very few interventions addressing class specifically (only two[13]), and class was described as a poor relation to other characteristics protected by law (e.g. gender, ethnicity, disability). Some participants also acknowledged the difficulty of knowing what the "problem of class" was. This was sometimes seen as a lack of data, sometimes as a lack of knowing which data to collect, indicating that by not talking about class, there was a lack of a shared language with which to talk about class. The Arts Council Report on Diversity (Arts Council England, 2016; 2019) illustrates this. Whilst it includes "socio-economic status" as a dimension of diversity, it does not explain what it means by this or measure class as it does gender, ethnicity and disability. It also omits any discussion of this in the body of its report. Inclusion here is thus arguably more tokenistic, a nod to class rather than a detailed analysis[14].

Although class was somewhat confused and 'quiet' in Phase One, the response of participants in Phases Two suggested class could be given form as a regional and institutional identity. As described in Chapter Four, I initially arranged two focus

[13] This included the Museums Association now defunct Diversify Scheme which included socioeconomic status, and Leicester University Museum Studies studentship scheme

[14] In December 2019 the Arts Council of England announced it was going to measure class within its funded organisations and reported back on its assessment and adoption of a particular measure of class; occupation of parents at age 14. https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2019/dec/16/arts-council-takes-steps-to-tackle-working-class-gaps-in-workforce

groups in London (where I am based) and then, with help from participants in Phase One, made a call to source venues around the UK. Offers of regional venues were quick, and a regional dimension also cast as essential. This contribution from Manchester was typical (most of the responses were on Twitter and hence not counted as data):

> *Obviously I saw that you're doing something in London and I thought it was really important to do something up in the north. …As soon as I saw it [recruitment call for participants and venues] I was, like, yes we need to do it up here. I just feel, I feel it's really important to give working class people a voice. (*Focus group participant, Manchester)

This extract conflates a particular social class ("*working class people*") with a particular geographic region ("*the North*"). The use of the word "*obviously*" implies an everyday understanding of this distinction. It is interesting too that a discussion **about** class, should be seen as a discussion **by** a particular class ("*important to give working class people a voice*"), balancing any potential misappropriation by those in London. This everyday regional "classing" was also augmented by particular field-level distinctions. Participants commented on the choice of venues as classed, either because of the collection, funding or location.

> *P1 The Whitworth I would never come to the Whitworth, I feel very uncomfortable here, it's just it's not for me, I feel really intimidated by art, I just will not come and I lead a museum.*
> *P2 Well actually I'm quite surprised at this session was going to be held at the Whitworth Museum.* (Focus group participants, Manchester)

> *You [the researcher] went to Birmingham to do it [a focus group] because Birmingham was funded. There's no money in the Black Country but … you've got Soho House Museum which is in Handsworth in Birmingham. It's not particularly… but it's a beautiful little museum. And for a conversation about class, I'd be much, I would have expected, it's not that far out of town it's about ten minutes away.* (Focus group participant, Manchester)

These extracts all deploy field-level knowledge to suggest which venues might be suitable for a discussion on class. They argue that a less intimidating ("*not art*"), less well-funded and less central venue would be more appropriate, again implying that the discussion should be about and for a particular class. They also conflate the class of

institutions with the class of people. That class can be given form as a field-level regional and institutional identity – and with seemingly shared understanding - is potentially an important way of making class and classed inequality visible. I explore the institutional distinctions further in the next Chapter (6.1).

Likewise, the response of participants in Phase Three (interviews) suggested a great interest in giving class form as a personal history. Within the interviews, participants were able to construct class within the context of their background and their career journey – either as a carefully composed written narrative or as a conversation with me. This process thus bought to light and life, aspects of their background that perhaps were hidden within the everyday business of work; class as hardship, or career as a difficult journey. These narratives thus provide a counter to "knowing" class as an objective measure (i.e. occupation). In this way they echo the epistemological struggles of the field – between objective accounts of objects to subjective accounts of lived experience. This struggle between forms of knowing class – authority and authenticity - is something I return to in Chapter Seven.

A final note on research context is to consider who didn't take part. Those people doing those roles constructed as low status (as described by participants in Chapter Seven) e.g. security, cleaning, some front of house rarely took part. This was in spite of my efforts as discussed in Chapter Four. This may be for practical reasons (i.e. not having the opportunity to know about the research in ways that others, with desks and computers to hand, did). It may also be a form of self-exclusion, that this 'game' of research is not seen as one they can – or want to – play. The implications of this are discussed more fully in the Discussion, Chapter Eight.

Summary

The above section illustrates how class and classed inequality are contextualised rather than essentialised constructs. Both are shaped by broader discursive contexts. And it is the fluidity of these discursive contexts and how they are used that makes class sometimes seem confusing and difficult to see. At the same time it is by talking about class and classed inequality that one can see what is potentially valued within a context. Hence whilst official schemas use the language of the economic market; discourses within the museum field focus on cultural capital, institutional size, location, collection

and funding. More specifically the research context gave certain people the opportunity to construct class as a personal narrative. The discourses that shape distinctions within the field and their relationship to class is something I explore more fully in the next two chapters.

5.4) Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored how class and classed inequality are constructed in relation to the field of UK museum work. I first situate the research highlighting the economic and political context which has been variously characterised by a longer-term trend to marketisation; austerity policies, Brexit and more currently, the COVID-19 pandemic. I also outline the way boundaries and hierarchies were useful tools, empirically and analytically for examining how distinctions were constructed without and within the field.

In 5.2, I show how the field was constructed. I show that this is an ongoing struggle shaped by two discursive co-ordinates; the first *The market or the state* illustrates how people in museums construct their field in relation to the market and other funders, including the 'state', and the second *Exclusive or inclusive practices*, illustrates how museums construct their field in relation to museological practice – as exclusive or inclusive. The most dominant and celebrated positioning was of museums as quite distinct from the economic market, and as increasingly inclusive of the public as visitors, subjects and beneficiaries. Within this however, there were more nuanced distinctions, between bad funders (corporates) and good funders (government), and subtle resistance to a wholly inclusive practice which undermined the collections, and collection-based knowledge of the museum 'professional'. These discursive co-ordinates are not wholly unrelated and both illustrate the discursive power' of funders, in particular the government.

In 5.3 I outline how class and classed inequality are constructed within the field. I show that class and classed inequality are shaped by, and reflective of, broader discursive contexts. Likewise, the way class is talked about reflects how the broader context, in this case the museum field, is constructed. This also depends on discursive power.

Specifically I show that participants found class in the field confusing and difficult to see, when constructed through generic discourses from outside the field i.e. class through an economic lens; or class inequality through the lens of social mobility. Rather participants found class and classed inequality easier to see when mapped onto field-level distinctions i.e. regional distinctions, and institutional profiles such as collection type, location and funding. This suggests that the way distinction is constructed within the field is important for understanding class and classed inequality. It is this to which I turn in the next chapter.

Chapter Six: Distinctions within the field

In the last chapter I explored how class and classed inequality were constructed in relation to the museum field. I showed the way in which the field was constructed through struggles without - *The market or the state* - and struggles within - *Exclusive or inclusive practice*. I discussed how class and classed inequality were both shaped by and indicative of context. And I consider how discursive power is related to these processes, often attached to position such as funding body including government, or the more contested role of 'expert'.

In this chapter I explore the distinctions 'within' the field, showing how hierarchies of institution and occupational role are constructed and legitimated. I show how resistance to the market is maintained through the discourses of *A collections meritocracy* and *Distinguishing knowledge,* whilst a compromise of sorts is constructed though a *Market for recognition*. Furthermore the influence of the market is apparent through the increasing status of funders and fundraisers. I also explore how class is conflated with these hierarchies of distinction and illustrate the inequalities between institution and individual; inequalities which could potentially be called classed but which are not. I reflect on how discursive power is 'enacted' through these processes.

I present these arguments in three sections. In 6.1) *Constructing distinction* I focus on the discursive processes participants use to distinguish museums and occupational roles. In 6.2) *The influence of the market*: I explore how the "market" is accommodated within these distinguishing processes. In 6.3) *Distinction, class and classed inequality:* I explore the way class and class inequality are constructed in relation to these processes of distinction.

6.1) Constructing distinction

In this section I explore how museums and occupational roles are hierarchised and the discourses deployed to distinguish and legitimate distinctions between them. I thus show how 'distinction' is constructed and legitimised in the field. In 6.1.1) *Constructing hierarchies*, I describe how these hierarchies were put together. In 6.1.2) *A collections meritocracy* I show how "collections" are deployed to legitimate the distinction of

certain museums over others, and in 6.1.3) *Distinguishing knowledge*: I discuss the discursive processes by which occupational roles are distinguished.

6.1.1) Constructing hierarchies

As noted in Chapter Five (5.1.1) the hierarchised nature of UK museum work was something I detected early on in my data collection. Participants described long-standing hierarchies between types of museum (including collection types) and between particular occupational roles. This was something I then explored explicitly in focus groups and interviews asking participants to locate both museum and also occupational role on a distinguishing hierarchy (see Chapter Four). I outline some of these discussions in Table J below.

Table J: Constructing a hierarchy of museums and occupational roles.[15]

Level of distinction	***Museum***	***Occupational Role***
Highest	*National Museum?* *Top of the top. No dispute around here.* (Focus group participants, Manchester)	*Curators?* *They got the rock star treatment* (Focus group participants, Manchester)
Middling status (contested)	*Military collection?* *They're quite low, mid to low.* *I mean, that's very complicated, I think, because it depends which one they are.* *It depends which regiment.* *I think they're higher than science, military collections. Think of the funding they get from MOD, at the moment.* *Yes, and they're often run by retired generals* (Focus group participants, London)	*Educator?* *Below middle.* *Yes, I was going to say middle.* *Yeah I think below middle. Obviously, they don't bring in any money […].* *I think it's just completely being taken for granted. Like, it has to happen and that just happens over there.* (Focus group participants, London)
Lowest status	*A community museum?* *Right down at the bottom.* *Aww, I love community museums* *On the page?*	*Cleaner?* *Low.* *How low?* *Low, not even on the board.*

[15] As described in Chapter Four (4.3.2), here participants in the focus groups are positioning post-it notes on a flip chart page hence the phrases in some quotes, "*on the page*" and "*on the board*"

	Yes, on the page (Focus group participants, London)	*It's outsourced and low* (Focus group participants, London)

The construction of these hierarchies was strikingly consistent across the data, particularly when it came to positions at the top and the bottom. In terms of museums for example, national museums were consistently constructed as having most distinction; whilst community museums were classed as the lowest. Similarly, in terms of occupational roles, curatorial or Director roles were placed high up, whilst cleaning and security were invariably placed low down. As can be seen in Table J, there was very little discussion, and minimal disagreement, between participants when locating museums and occupational roles at the top or bottom of a hierarchy. This suggests a great deal of coherence around these constructions; an almost taken-for-granted-ness that "this is how it is". Indeed low status was afforded, for example, even in spite of personal feelings ("*Aww, I love community museums*").

By contrast, there was often a great deal of discussion around museums and roles in between these two pole positions. Museums such as local authority, independent, university, military generated greater discursive struggle and thus expose some of the discourses shaping how distinction is assumed. In the example of military museums above participants invoked their current level of financial support (i.e. "*the funding they get from the MOD at the moment*"), and the assumed class of staff in charge ("*often run by retired generals*") as distinguishing processes. Likewise, roles such as education, marketing, fundraising, digital also generated some confusion and discussion. In the occupational role example above, the positioning of "education" is also aligned with money ("*Obviously, they don't bring in any money*") and also with a sense of newness versus continuity ("*It has to happen and that just happens over there").* These discussions thus illustrate some of the discursive processes of distinction used within the field, and which I describe below.

6.1.2) A collections meritocracy

As outlined above, national museums were consistently positioned as having the most distinction, and with relatively little disagreement. Indeed, as I will show, being a "national' conferred considerable discursive power, enabling access to a special club of museums described as "*lead institutions'* with a mandate *to share 'expertise*' (Mendoza,

2017, p.12) delineated by a particular relationship to – and funding from - government. In this section I show how this position is legitimated through government support; the hegemonic discourse of '*A collections meritocracy'* and reinforced through a trade in institutional cultural capital by people within the field.

The distinction of national museums is in part underpinned by their different funding arrangements to other museums, including their proximity to central government. As detailed in Chapter Three, national museums report directly to and receive funding from central government. Indeed, in the Mendoza review of museums in 2017, national museums are described as "*government-sponsored*" (Mendoza, 2017, p.6), and "*are some of the only cultural organisations in England, of any type, to hold direct relationships with central government" (*Mendoza, 2017, p.6). This creates an "us and them" structure within the field, positioning national museums as belonging to a category distinct from other museums. This distinctive positioning is further enhanced by the government's mandate to national museums to jointly influence and lead the field. Both government and national museums are described as:

> *[…] locked in a cultural embrace and together they play a vital role in influencing the health, strength, and development of England's wider museum sector.* (Mendoza, 2017, p.6.).

Indeed, the responsibilities of national museums are given their own section in the review (*National responsibilities for national museums*, p.14), in which national museums are encouraged to share their collections and their expertise (but not their funding) with other museums. The Mendoza review thus reinforces a "them and us" construction, positioning national museums as distinct from and superior to all other museums; a position that is underpinned by government funding.

The distinction of national museums is legitimated by the discourse of *'A collections meritocracy'*. Here collections or objects are constructed as having an inherent merit or value, which warrant an appropriate level of stewardship, and hence funding. They also confer distinction on those institutions caring for them. Again, this is evident in the Mendoza review (2017) below:

> *These […] are known as national museums because their highly valuable collections of world-class significance are looked after on behalf of the nation*. (Mendoza, 2017, p.14).

In this extract the report authors explain what a national museum is, by using the distinguishing quality of the collection ("*highly valuable*" "*world-class significance")* as well as who these collections are ostensibly in trust for ("*looked after on behalf of the nation*"). The merit of the collection is used not only to confer distinction onto a museum, it is definitive **of** an institution. This association between collection and institution was seen throughout the data; as exemplified below:

> *[With nationals] you are dealing with superlative objects and I think that makes a difference because I think there's a value, there's a cachet, you're on the international stage, you're working for a national…* (Interviewee, Funding Body)

Here, the speaker talks of a curatorial role in a national museum, showing how the distinction of a collection (*"superlative objects"*) is associated with that of the institution ("*you're working for a national").* As with the extract above, these have an international remit ("*world stage*") indicating on which terms the merit of the collection is constructed i.e. an assumed global audience.

However, the discourse of 'a collections meritocracy' is not necessarily a neutral one. This is not to say that there may well be certain collections and objects which are more unique and valuable than others. Rather it is to highlight that economic capital and discursive power play a part both in how collections are amassed and in how 'merit' is constructed. Hence, as shown in Chapter Three many collections have started from money. And some of the earliest museums have had a head start in collecting meaning they have the discursive power to name the collections of value. This was openly acknowledged by participants in one London focus group, though with a sense of historical distance that neutralised any current day inequality. In the extracts below they talk of these historic roots:

> P1 *You get some places like Ipswich, Saffron Walden, there are incredible collections*
>
> *P1 Because in the early 19th century, those were very wealthy trading towns, and there were rich people locally who gave their collections to the local museum.*
>
> *P3 So, often there are some of those museums whose collections have a higher status than the institution, if you know what I mean.*
>
> (Focus group participants, London)

RES: Explain to me as somebody who doesn't know, why would national museum be at the top?

P1 Because it's the best collections, the best funding, the best people. […]

P2 And because they've been around for such a long time, they've sort of had their hands out first for any requests when collecting was really at its zenith.

(Researcher and focus group participants, London)

These extracts illustrate this less than neutral association between institutions and collections. In the first extract, the idea that the distinction of the collections is higher than that of the institution is constructed as something of a curiosity (*"do you know what I mean?"*). It speaks to an assumption that these should somehow be aligned. That they are not is explained historically by making a direct link between the former wealth and distinction of the town and the museum (*"rich people locally gave their collections"*), a position which has now presumably declined. A historical explanation is also used in the second extract to explain the positioning of national museums. Here it is to explain why being the first to collect may also account for having the "best" (*"had their hands out first"*). Curiously, best is also applied to funding and people, conflating economic capital with distinction. It highlights the hegemonic and hence discursive power of a collections meritocracy, which not only legitimises historical amassing of the most valuable "objects" but also current amassing of the most valuable funding and people too.

The positioning of national museums at the top of a distinction hierarchy was not without detractors. This was primarily within the regional focus groups, Bristol and Wales. Hence in both, participants challenged the power and funding invested in the nationals, and a few even challenged the distinction of the collections as seen below;

P1 Are you going to put the national museum right at the very top? Because … they aren't necessarily as good as, they're not the best museums, right. It's just because they've got this, they're national….. and therefore they've got government backing, government funding, they must be employing the best.

P2 They have better collections though, sometimes. They … have lots and lots of stuff.

P1 They have lots of stuff, but they don't do anything with it.

P2 Oh, the regional museums are terrible at not doing anything with their stuff.

(Focus group participants, Bristol)

This exchange was from a curator and volunteer in a regional museum. The first speaker challenges the assumption that having a national title is a proxy for being the best, constructing it instead as a shorthand for power ("*government support and backing*"). However, whilst challenging the power of the "national" title, the speaker does not challenge the "collections meritocracy" in making these distinctions. Indeed, the exchange is based on who has the best collections and does the most with them - nationals or regionals - and hence reinforces the power of this discourse.

Whilst there was dissent as described above, the distinction of national museums was also reinforced in a taken for granted way. Hence there were a few examples of participants using the name of a national museum to legitimate their own project or career, as below:

The Museum of Homelessness. We don't have a building and we don't have a collection as yet. We've focused on the people and together we'll be launching our public programme at Tate Modern and Tate Liverpool. (Speaker, MA Conference Debate)

Here the distinction of a London and regional branch of a national art gallery is used as a form of institutional cultural capital to lend legitimacy to a new museum with no building or collection. This thus further reinforces the distinction and discursive power of the national museum. Furthermore, many participants talked of the distinction invested in gaining a position within a national museum. Many were also willing to acquire this "distinction" by sacrificing higher levels of pay. I discuss this further in 6.3.

The discursive processes of distinction which valorised certain museums above others e.g. national museums, thus comprise a sanctioning by government, the discourse of a collection meritocracy and the reinforcement of those within the field. The collections meritocracy assumes a neutral evaluation of collections, although much like the meritocracy in the workplace, obscures the advantages of economic capital and "discursive power" to both collect and to name those collections worth having. In the next section, I explore the processes of distinction by which occupational occupational roles were hierarchised.

6.1.3) Distinguishing knowledge

In this section I explore the processes by which participants distinguished different occupational roles. As shown above, certain roles e.g. curator were seen to have greater distinction than others. This was in part due to the way their work was constructed as not only distinctive to but distinctive of the field in contrast to roles that could be done outside the field e.g. marketing or cleaning. It was also because of the relationship the role had to knowledge e.g. types of knowing (art over social history) or ways of using it (creating over facilitating). I explore these further below.

As noted, there was a great deal of consistency in the way certain occupational roles e.g. curatorial were constructed as having greater distinction than others. Such roles were seen to be distinctive of museum work in a way that other roles were not i.e. if one were to think of museum work, one would think of curators. The level of consensus around this positioning can be seen in the taken-for-granted way it was presented not only to people within the field, but also to those without. These constructions can be seen below:

> *So, when people think about working in a museum they obviously think about the specialist roles. So, they think about curatorship, conservation, education, exhibition work, and so on. But obviously, lots of museums are very big, complex organisations and so also employ everyone from, you know, cleaners to people working in marketing and business administration. You know, generic roles of the kind that you would have in any large organisation; IT and financial management and so on.* (Interviewee, Museum Membership Body)

> *There's always been a divide between those who work on the lower grades, often less educated, and obviously on poor salaries and the curator grade staff which to be fair also on not great salaries, for what they do! But they are university educated, and they've got the knowledge and they are often like seen as the one who are the museums.* (Interviewee, Trade Union)

These two extracts illustrate the way certain roles are seen to be not just distinctive, but definitive of museum work. In the first extract, certain roles ("*curatorship, conservation, education, exhibition work*") are constructed as distinctive to ("*specialist*") and definitive of the field *("when people think about working in a museum, they obviously think of…"*). This is in contrast to those roles that are not distinctive to the field ("*could have in any*

large organisation"). The use of the word "*obviously*" invokes this as a commonly held assumption. In the second, the speaker positions the curator as definitive of the field ("*seen as the one who are the museums"*) and constructs a hierarchy between this role and all other staff ("*those who work on lower grades*"). This distinction is augmented by the cultural capital held by the curator grade staff (*"university educated", "got the knowledge"*), in contrast to other staff who are (*"often less educated"*), and not well remunerated for their work ("*obviously on poor salaries*"). The use of the word "obviously" here invokes a commonly-held assumption that lower grade equals lower pay, although the speaker then notes that higher grades are also badly paid. Distinction is thus constructed independently of economic reward.

By contrast, roles that were not exclusive to the field, were seen to have less distinction. Hence those roles that are associated with generic organisational management – or the market - as indicated in the paragraph above (e.g. "*cleaning", "marketing", "business administration", "IT and financial management"*) were consistently constructed as having less distinction than those seen as specialist. This was evidenced in the interviews and in the focus groups, as in the example below:

> *P1 Most of the managers in our organisation are curators. Because of the way that the structures have evolved […]because they've been there the longest and had the skills*
>
> *P2 But do they still work as curators?*
>
> *P1 No, not now. So, it's interesting isn't it? Because they've got more responsibility but the actual status of their job is lower down***.** (Focus group participants, Leeds)

The extract here illustrates this relationship. Hence whilst managers are constructed as having greater responsibility, they have less distinction than curators ("*their job is lower down*"). Despite these being the same people, with the same knowledge and abilities ("*been there the longest and had the skills*"), their "progression" into a management position lent them less distinction. The speaker notes that this reverses the logic of an assumed organisational hierarchy ("*It's interesting isn't it?*). Along with the paragraph above, it shows that distinction within the field is constructed independently of pay and level of responsibility.

Whilst generic functions were seen to have less distinction than specialist ones, there were certain roles that had very little distinction indeed. Often these were roles that, whilst constructed as necessary, were often outsourced e.g. cleaning, security and also front of house roles, and so not employed by the museum hence lending them even less distinction. These two exchanges from focus group discussions illustrate this:

> *Cleaner? I don't want to say the lowest of the low but it, kind of, the perception is…And often not employed by the organisation which I think does change status.*
>
> (Focus group participant, Manchester)

> *P1 Security guards? Bit lower than front of house?*
>
> *P2 A bit lower, I also agree with that, but not as low as cleaner.*
>
> *P3 I think there's a difference because they're contracted outside so they haven't been trained by the museum, generally.* (Focus group participants, London)

Both these place the role of cleaner at the bottom of the hierarchy (*"the lowest of the low" "not as low as cleaner*"), with some discussion in the second as to where security are positioned, although the ranking they agree on ("*above cleaner and below front of house*") was a common positioning across all focus groups. The first extract hedges this positioning ("*I don't want to say*"), attributing it to *"the perception*", rather than their own, perhaps indicating a discomfort on positioning a cleaning role at the bottom. And both extracts defend this positioning by suggesting these roles are a low status because they are outsourced ("*often not employed by the organisation", they're contracted outside" "haven't been trained by the museum*"). These roles are thus classed as so far away from being distinctive of museum work, as to not even be employed by a museum. There is something of a circularity to this, as their employment status is deployed to justify their low distinction, and their low distinction is in part due to their employment status.

A further distinguishing dimension deployed was the relationship to knowledge, both how it is used and type. This was particularly salient in the nuanced distinctions between specialist roles e.g. curator, conservator, educator. Hence, participants often constructed a clear hierarchy between roles seen as specialist to museums – with curator at the top, then conservator and educator somewhere below. Discussions in focus

groups pivoted on a hierarchy of "knowing" e.g. knowing what over knowing how (skills of the conservator over the knowledge of the curator) and also of how the knowledge is constructed and used (curating **new** exhibitions over maintaining **existing** collections). The extract below is from a museum educator who was asked to reflect on why education is constructed as having less distinction than other specialist roles:

> *I just think as an educator you are facilitating knowledge, other people's knowledge or your own knowledge of a collection. As a curator… you have an expertise where you own that knowledge yourself and you are creating it for others to use*. (Interviewee, Specialist Museum Group).

This illustrates the way in which relationship to knowing is used as a distinguishing dimension. Those able to create "new" knowledge (the curator) are seen to have a higher elevation than those who simply use what already exists. It shows how the curator has distinction invested in both the job title, and the actual practices associated with the role.

Distinction of a role was also mediated by the distinction of an institution. Hence, specialist roles such as curator became more specialist in national museums, focussing on particular collection types. Whereas in smaller museums, the curator role often performed all of the roles above, curating, education, marketing, fundraising, front-of-house and cleaning. Conversely, more generic roles such as marketing and front of house, were more valued in institutions which relied more on generating income. This was evident in both the interviews and also in the Leeds focus group in particular:

> *P1 It depends on the size of the organisation as well, doesn't it? […]The bigger you get the more specialised you get.*
>
> *P2 When I worked in a national, it [curator] was definitely really high status. And I think that does depend on the type of museum.* (Focus group participants, Leeds)
>
> *If you're in an independent museum, then marketing is all important. So sometimes that's going to be higher than if you're in a local authority.* (Focus group participant, Leeds)

These extracts illustrate the way institution can shape the way a role is valued. Here, curators employed in a national museum can become more specialised and as a result achieve a higher distinction ("*really high status*"). And roles associated with generating

income – marketing– are given a higher status in those organisations which rely quite explicitly on these forms of income, i.e. independent. This is in contrast to other museums that do not rely on, and hence engage with the market so openly (i.e. local authority). The discussion here illustrates the mediating and mutually beneficial relationship between institution and occupational role, with each conferring a value on each as required i.e. distinction or money.

The discursive "processes of distinction' by which occupational roles are hierarchised thus comprise an ability to distinguish the field, both by its special-ness to museums (i.e. not done in any other field) and also by its relationship to "distinguishing knowledge" (i.e. owning the production of "new" knowledge). Distinction is conferred regardless of pay or formal responsibility. Though those constructed as non-specialist have less distinction to the point that some are outsourced decreasing their stock of distinction even further.

Summary

In this section I have explored the discursive processes by which museum work – delineated by museum and occupational role – is distinguished. I show a "them and us" construction between national and other museums, a relationship mandated by government, legitimated through the discourse of *A collections meritocracy* and reinforced by those within the field. Occupational roles are distinguished through their ability to augment the specialness of museums (by not being done anywhere else), and by producing distinguishing knowledge. Arguably this *Distinguishing knowledge* is mutually reinforcing of the collections meritocracy; specialist expertise lends distinction to certain collections, whilst certain collections (and institutions) lend greater distinction to the knowledge. Within these processes the discourse of the "market" – or money - is kept at arms-length; the economic capital which underpins collections is subtly distanced by being constructed as historic, whilst roles done in a broader job market (e.g. generic managers or marketing roles) have less distinction. However, there is a market of sorts through which distinction is legitimated. It is this that I explore in the next section.

6.2) The influence of the market

In this section I explore how the discourse of the "market" was implicated within processes of distinction. In 6.2.1) *A market for recognition* I show how public recognition is deployed to legitimate the distinction of museums and also occupational roles, often through the language of the market. And in 6.2.2) *A good market for funders:* I show how the current funding climate has led to an increasing influence of funders and increased demand for fundraising skills. I show how the influence of these unsettled the discursive processes of distinction outlined above.

6.2.1) A market for recognition

Participants used public recognition as a way to evaluate and legitimate levels of distinction of both museums and types of work. Public recognition was also constructed as a distinguishing dimension itself, a form of valued capital, and hence subject to a competitive market. Indeed the language of the market was occasionally deployed when doing so, for example, when talking about "tourism" or the "brand" of a museum. However there was a delicate balance between being seen to simply appeal to the public or the market, and retaining some form of specialist and professional distinction, often in the form of specialist knowledge. I discuss these below.

As noted, participants frequently invoked public recognition to legitimate the distinction of a museum. Having the highest numbers of visitors and owning well-known objects was seen as justification for the high distinction afforded to national museums. This thus shows that whilst being market or profit-driven was ostensibly disavowed, competing for 'recognition' was fair game. Indeed as the extracts below illustrate, this was sometimes described through the language of the market:

> *P1 Nationals get more footfall for just from where they are […].*
>
> *P2 It's the tourism that goes with them, the different kind of visitors […].*
>
> *P3 And people know their stuff, and they know the Rosetta stone or whatever.*
>
> (Focus group participants, Bristol)

> *P1 I think a lot of it is brand.*
>
> *P2 Biggest audiences generally, as well. Biggest recognition.*

P3 Their collection's got the paintings or the objects in their collections that everyone comes to see. (Focus group participants, London)

These exchanges show how visitor numbers ("*footfall" "biggest audiences" "tourism*"), fame of objects ("*people know their stuff*") and institutional name ("*brand"*) are all ways of legitimating distinction. These extracts followed a question from me as to why national museums should have high distinction. The terms *"footfall" "tourism"* and *"brand"* illustrate, at least in these examples, the use of a market discourse. The use of this discourse is not at odds with the way distinction is constructed, indeed it is contributing to it. It illustrates how a market discourse has been accommodated within a field-level discourse, here competing for profile rather than profit. Being known and being popular count towards distinction.

Similarly, "public recognition" was also used to evaluate the distinction of different occupational roles. In focus groups in particular participants used public recognition of a role to legitimate their arguments for or against distinction. At the same time, the public were constructed as not fully understanding the work that went on in museums.

P1 Curatorial? I would say it's got lower than it was.

P2 I would say it should be higher than marketing.

P1 I think it should, yes.

P3 I don't know. I still think it is high status. I still get people go, oh you're a curator? Who aren't in the sector. (Focus group participants, Leeds)

Quite a specific example. We work together, we co-produce, I wouldn't have said I curated any more than you did actually. The music exhibition we just put on, but in terms of press stuff, they only ask for me because I've got the curator title. (Focus group participant, Bristol)

Both these extracts suggest that the curator title has a significant distinction because it is recognised by the public and the press. In the first extract, participants debate the relative distinction of curator and marketing, a debate that the final speaker arbitrates, by suggesting that public recognition of the role (*"oh you're a curator?"*) can be deployed to maintain its distinction *("it still has high status*"). In the second extract the speaker also uses "public recognition" ("*in terms of press stuff"*) to argue that curator has distinction (*"because I've got the curator title*"). This is in spite of the curation that has been done by someone who doesn't have the title ("*I wouldn't have said I curated*

any more than you did actually"). Both extracts highlight how high levels of public recognition of a role helps legitimate high levels of distinction.

Indeed "public recognition" was constructed as an increasingly valuable pursuit in the field, particularly in the form of media profile and particularly at certain positions in the hierarchy. Participants talked about the increasing exposure of museums on television (TV) as below:

> *When I was growing up and I went to museums all the time, there weren't lots of television programs about museums. You know there's been a British museum one, National Museum of Scotland, the National Trust, the Imperial War Museum. You know, there's been so many different programs… so people, I suppose, are more exposed to the sector as an opportunity.* (Interviewee, Professional Body)

This participant reflects on a change in how museums present themselves, from a time when they weren't on TV, to a time now when their appearance is prolific. They suggest that having a TV programme about your museum is a sign of distinction, of having "arrived'. Indeed, the museums the speaker cites are all national institutions implying that, even if other museums are on TV, it is the national names happen to be most prominent. Being in the media was also constructed as the prerogative and responsibility of certain roles.

> *Your director is always your external profile […]always in The Guardian magazine or whatever newspaper. (*Focus group participant Bristol)

Here the participant is reflecting on the role of Director, suggesting that not only do they have a high media profile, but that their position has some equivalence to the distinction of the museum ("*your director **is** always your external profile*"). It illustrates how gaining media profile is constructed as both an increasing trend within the museum field, and one associated with having distinction.

Indeed having a media profile was also deployed as a distinguishing dimension. This can be seen in the extract in Chapter Five (5.3.2), whereby "*going to be on telly soon"* was deployed as a distinguishing device, between being in a museum or the streets, or in one class and another. It was also deployed as a distinguishing device in the focus groups:

Well unless you've got your curator on TV, like Brian Cox […] suddenly it's high status. (Focus group participant, Manchester)

P1 But if you go and ask anybody in the general public who are conservators or what are the goblins that are in the back and do stuff, that you never see.

P2 Like technicians and…

P3 Yes, unless you see them on a TV program or like on Twitter the other day cleaning the T Rex's teeth. That gives them a bit more status. (Focus group participants, Manchester)

These two extracts illustrate how gaining public recognition by being on TV was used to evaluate distinction. In the first, the speaker is considering the relative distinction of university museums. They suggest that having a well-known curator on TV (albeit mistakenly depicting Brian Cox as a curator when he is an academic[16]) enhances the distinction of a museum. Similarly the second exchange illustrates how having no recognition ("*in the back" "that you never see*"), compares with public recognition ("*see them on a TV programme or like on Twitter*"). These illustrate the way that public recognition is not only deployed to evaluate distinction of museums and occupational roles but is also a valued form of capital in itself, particularly as media profile.

However the pursuit of recognition was constructed as requiring careful calibration in order to keep the discourse of "the market" at bay. Hence it was often not seen as appropriate for an institution to pursue "recognition for recognition's sake". This can be seen when participants talked about being a "visitor attraction". Whilst arguably a similar discursive register as tourism and brand above, the term "visitor attraction" was often denoted a low status, such to the point that it was cast as a non-museum. This is illustrated below:

P1 Let me tell you what's weird, if it's scientific instruments it's quite high status, but if it's general science it's low status.

P2 Yes, because it's like being in a visitor attraction. […]

P3 I think if you're like a science centre, it's probably quite low status.

[16] Brian Cox OBE FRS is a physicist who regularly appears on TV and radio programmes in the UK.

P4 The more you do to teach science in interactive centres, the lower status you are. The more you're about completely pointless historic, scientific objects will seem higher status. (Focus group participants, London)

Here the participants are evaluating the status of science collections. They note that those institutions that seek to provide public access to science ("*teach science in interactive centres"*) have a low status, whilst those that retain a collection ("*scientific instruments' "pointless, historic scientific objects"*) have a higher status. Low status is equated with "*like being in a visitor attraction*", a position that others in the focus group are assumed to understand. The curios-ness of this positioning, noted by participants ("*Let me tell you what's weird"*), is perhaps that it runs counter to the idea that museums should be about inclusivity (as discussed in Chapter Five). It suggests that being "only" about visitors - and hence too close to "the market" - somehow demeans what is understood to be a museum. Rather, it is important to balance this role by having the distinction of a collection, albeit "pointless objects".

The distinction and discursive power attached to having "recognition", was also constructed as a form of inequality. Hence, some roles were described as enabling levels of recognition constructed as unfair;

*And you get your guest curators. Your big temporary shows. The superstar, kind of thing. And then you've got your people in the engine room who are just trying to keep your collection going. (*Focus group participant, Leeds)

This speaker here suggests that the recognition discourse had perhaps gone a bit too far, conferring a level of quasi-celebrity distinction upon certain roles (the "*superstar curator*"), whilst obscuring those whose work is everyday but nonetheless crucial ("*people in the engine room who are just trying to keep your collection going").* Indeed, certain work roles were seen to confer such little recognition, that the people doing them were also unrecognised:

Once you're in front of house, you're invisible. The number of people I see in those other roles that walk past front of house people, and don't even acknowledge and say hi. (Focus group participant, London)

I mean our cleaners and visitor assistants always complain about you know, the fact that the Director would go past, never like look at them and say hello; that

the curators look down at them because they're not educated…(Interviewee, Trade Union)

These extracts from focus group discussions illustrate the way that "recognition" is constructed as a form of inequality, which could be described as classed. Both extracts construct a lack of recognition (i.e. *"being walked past", "unacknowledged", "looked down at"*) as a negative experience, here a potential lack of respect by colleagues. That it can be done by certain roles ("*people in other roles", "the Director", "the curators"*) to others ("*front of house", "cleaners", "visitor assistants"*) illustrates the power dynamics underpinning this. The Director and curators have the power to bestow recognition, they do not need recognition themselves. It illustrates the way certain positions are not only invested with greater distinction, but also greater discursive power to confer distinction onto others.

The discourse of "recognition" then is a salient one in how distinction is legitimated and constructed. Public recognition is deployed to legitimate the distinction of certain museums and occupational roles (e.g. national museums, curators), and indeed the pursuit of public recognition, particularly as media profile had become a valued form of distinction in itself. This amplifies the hierarchy further as certain positions (e.g. national museums, curators) are invested with a level of recognition, unavailable or difficult to attain for other roles. The discussion shows how a market of sorts is accommodated within existing processes of distinction; hence, whilst accumulating economic profit is not legitimate, accumulating profile is a legitimate pursuit, as long as this balanced with field-distinguishing processes such as rare collections. The influence of the "market" in economic terms however is increasing as I show next.

6.2.2) A good market for funders

In this section I explore how the increasingly competitive funding climate, as described in Chapter Five, exposes existing "processes of distinction" to the discourse of the market. The need to secure and save money was seen to enhance the influence of generalist roles - fundraisers, digital roles, marketing people – and also funding bodies, who were able to assert their agendas (in particular seen to be imposing a "digital" agenda). Whilst constructed as important, such roles were also seen to challenge existing hierarchies hence leading to a great deal of discursive struggle within the focus

groups. Within these struggles participants deployed the above discourses – *Distinguishing knowledge* and *Market for Recognition* - in flexible ways. Hence, whilst public recognition was seen as a legitimator of distinction, a pursuit of *recognition for recognitions sake* was constructed as a potential diminishment of distinction. In this way participants successfully kept the "market" at a distance, maintaining the distinctiveness or 'specialness' of their field.

In Table K I illustrate some of the ways in which the existing hierarchies were challenged. In the examples below, both fundraising and digital are seen to be increasing in distinction ("*going higher*""*growing*"). The increasing profile of fundraising is signalled not only by its proximity to the Director (top of a hierarchy), but also as a route to becoming Director. The increasing influence of a fundraising person is constructed not necessarily as a positive thing. In the second extract, their influence is cast as lamentable (*"unfortunately"*), as it shapes the work of almost everyone else (*"a lot of us"*). The "us" in this construction – the speaker and colleagues in this regional focus group – were primarily curators and educators, i.e. specialists – whilst the fundraising manager is othered ("*they"*). Digital too is constructed as a valued part of a Directorial portfolio (third row in the Table), its profile enhanced by the agenda of funders who wish museums to enhance this skillset. The increase in the influence of digital roles is attributed to funder agendas, and this too is not necessarily seen as a positive thing.

Table K: Changing distinction of roles

Fundraising? I think that's one that's gone… *It's going higher.* *I'd say that's really near director, actually.* *Yes.* *And they're often well-paid, aren't they? Fundraising jobs.* (Focus group participants, London)
Fund raising manager? *Well, unfortunately they've got higher status than perhaps a lot of us because of the influence they can have on the things that we do*

(Focus group participants, Bristol)
Digital? *That's growing.* *That's growing, yes.* *Because all of the funders want you to have a digital footprint.* (Focus group participants, Leeds)
Out of these roles, who is most likely to become the director? *Today? Quite possibly fund raising or digital manager.* *Really?* *Yes, because they're the most important jobs that they need to know and understand* (Focus group participants, Bristol)

Whilst acknowledging that fundraising and digital roles has gained influence and seniority, participants were dubious this warranted the same levels of distinction as curatorial roles, often by suggesting they had lower levels of 'public recognition'. Hence, the idea that the public may not recognise these roles or see them as distinctive as more specialist roles, was used to legitimate a lower position in the hierarchy:

> *P1 Why would they [fundraising] have a higher, I don't agree with that, why would they have a high status?*
>
> *P2 Because of the onus on the organisation to fund.*
>
> *P1 But if someone said to you, you work in a museum and you said, what's your job and you said fundraising, I just don't think...* (Focus group participants, Manchester)

> *It's difficult, because when you talk about museums to other people, this would be very different. Because if I said a digital manager, it would be much lower. It would be much lower to someone in terms of status in a museum than a curator* (Focus group participant, Bristol)

In both these extracts, participants use 'public recognition' as an indication of its status. In the first extract, the initial speaker, whilst not finishing their last sentence, nonetheless implies that working in fundraising in a museum would not be seen (by "*someone*", presumably outside the field) as high status ("*I just don't think…").* Similarly in the second extract, the speaker suggests that outsiders ("*other people*") have an alternative view of status to that of the focus group ("*this would all be very different*"). Digital would be cast as much lower status than curator. These speakers thus deploy the discourse of recognition to construct and legitimate a lower status for fundraising and digital roles, relative to the publicly "recognition" afforded to the role of curator (as constructed in 6.2.1 above).

Somewhat paradoxically, participants also challenged the distinction of fundraising and digital roles by suggesting they had too much "recognition". Hence pursuing recognition simply to further one's own career or agenda was not seen to warrant legitimate distinction particularly if it was done without due regard to '*Distinguishing knowledge'*.

> *P1 They're the kind of people that would end up, potentially, becoming a director.*
>
> *P2 The fundraising people?*
>
> *P1 Yes. Because they will have the connections already. Like you say, you need to be an influential person to be a director. It's not necessarily about your knowledge of the sector. It's just how you can sell your own self.* (Focus group participants, Leeds)

In this extract, the participants (as with the extract in Table K) 'others' the fundraiser (*"they're the kind of people"*), constructing them as someone who, doesn't have the *Distinguishing knowledge* (*"the knowledge of the sector"*). Rather they are constructed as having been able to compete successfully as individuals in a *Market for Recognition* (securing "*the connections*", able to "*be an influential person*", and knowing *" how you can sell your own self"*). Any distinction attached to this role – as measured by seniority or influence - is thus constructed as less substantive and integral to the field than those with *Distinguishing knowledge.*

Digital too, despite its growing status was constructed as having less *Distinguishing Knowledge*, its influence reified by the agendas of funding bodies.

*The funding and the different agendas within the museum world […] the agenda is changing all the time, because digital, that is high and that's where the pay is, and that's where you see digital managing gets paid a fortune and then there's another new agenda. (*Focus group participant, Bristol)

Oh, we want everything to be digital. We want to get our collections online. But we've got nobody that's got the expertise to curate them and nobody to conserve them. As long as we can take a nice, shiny photo of them for a website then it's great. […]Digital, we've got a digital imprint […]. But then, the people who are managing those objects, which is what makes the museum, are lower down the rung. (Focus group participant, Leeds)

In the first extract, the high status of digital, accompanied by its high salaries ("*paid a fortune"*), is attributed to the influence of current, fashionable discourses within the field. This illustrates both an acknowledgement of and resistance to the discursive power of funding bodies; they are constructed as able to assert a view on what – and who - museums should spend their money on (i.e. digital roles) but then contested as simply being 'faddish' *("the agenda is changing all the time", "then there's another new agenda*"). These 'fads' undergo significant critique in the second extract. The speaker here complains of the focus on competing in a *Market for recognition ("nice shiny photo; we've got a digital imprint*") whilst overlooking the *Distinguishing knowledge* of certain roles *("expertise to curate them; people managing objects"),* the latter being seen as more important in distinguishing the field *("which is what makes the museum").* The faddishness of funders is seen to potentially amplify the *Market for recognition* in a way that then diminishes the status of those roles which distinguish the museum *("lower down the rung").*

Whilst afforded less distinction than specialist roles, fundraising was seen as having more distinction than more market-focussed roles, such as retail or marketing. This is in spite of their shared remit to generate income and illustrates the delicate balancing act between the need to raise money and to resist a full blown market logic. The following extract highlights this:

P1 I think it's [fundraising] one of those roles where people are suddenly going, we really need to focus on this area. For me fundraising would be right at the top, but it's not the same for everyone.

P2 I think retail is low.

P1 Yes, low.

P3 Yes.

P4 Retail is low but it does attract people to museums, doesn't it? But it is low, you're right. (Focus group participants, Wales)

Here participants of a focus group discuss the relative positioning of fundraising and retail roles. Fundraising, as noted in Table K, is described as having currency ("*suddenly going, we need to focus on this area*") and hence important, so important, that for one participant it is constructed as the highest. By contrast, retail is classed as low, with four participants agreeing. This in spite of retail being constructed here as a function that can generate recognition ("*it does attract people to museums, doesn't it?"),* and that retail would presumably be a significant source of income. The oddness of this contrast between fundraising and retail could be explained by the way in which fundraising can be associated with the discourse of inclusivity (e.g. the work of charities), whilst retail is associated with profit and the market. It can also potentially be seen to be connected to wealthy people and hence larger amounts of economic capital than the everyday transactions of visitors.

Digital too was favourably contrasted with market-orientated roles. In the exchange below, from a focus group discussion in London, participants discussed the relative status of marketing and digital. One participant constructed them as the same (and indeed the term digital is open to interpretation) forcing other participants to continually refine their arguments as to why digital is a higher status than marketing:

P1 I think digital is higher than marketing, currently. It's a bit more specialist to the sector in a way, whereas marketing is more generic.

P2 Or you outsource it. I mean, we get an agency. […]

P3 […] I think they're the same, personally.

P2 Digital are always flying around the world, giving themselves awards and glossy titles.

P3 Marketing do that

P2 This is a bit sexier, like …

P1 I think in terms of specialist skills, they have more specialist skills […]

P4 I think there's a real emphasis on access, a new thing, new digital means for it. I think it's like really zeitgeisty

P2 It's very sort of buzzy career, in digital. Yes.

P5 I think the status is about, because it is new but also lots of existing job incumbents have no scooby doo about it. So, they've elevated the status to enable them to have an impact as well. (Focus group participants, London)

The discussion here suggests that the relative status of digital and marketing is subject to some significant "struggle", although the majority here classed digital as higher than marketing, and eventually formed a consensus (in the focus group digital was placed higher on the board than marketing). Participants use the discourses described above – that digital has greater '*Distinguishing knowledge'* ("*is more specialist", "has more specialist skills*") whereas marketing doesn't ("*generic"*); try to distinguish it via the '*Market for recognition'* ("*giving themselves awards and glossy titles", "its sexier"*), before falling back on the fact it is new, and that in fact, its knowledge in the field is therefore 'distinctive'. The struggle here could be seen as an attempt to maintain a distance from the market. Digital is reified by its distinction from marketing, a practice that cannot be separated from the market.

The current squeeze on funding and the increasing need for money has intensified the struggle between museums and 'the market'. Whilst acknowledging the increasing influence of fundraising, digital and marketing roles within the field, the distinction of such roles is contested. Participants do this by using the discourses of *Distinguishing knowledge* and *Market for recognition* flexibly; suggesting that pursuit of the latter i.e. recognition for recognition's sake, without the former, diminishes distinction. The discursive struggles show the salient process of keeping the market at bay to keep museums special.

Summary

This section has explored how a market discourse of sorts is deployed when distinguishing museum work. The *Market for recognition* describes a discourse, whereby public recognition is used to legitimate distinction and also to construct a valued form of distinction in its own right. Increasingly those museums and occupational roles with most distinction – national museum, director and superstar curators - are also seen to have the most public recognition, often through the media – on TV, on social media or in the press. This needs to be carefully balanced with the possession of ostensibly distinctive (if "*pointless*") collections and *distinguishing*

knowledge to be seen as legitimate. As is shown in the latter section, pursuing *recognition for recognition's sake* is seen to undermine distinction. However, having secured valued forms of recognition furthers the discursive power of certain positions. Hence, whilst some positions can confer recognition (curators), others can only receive it (cleaners, front of house). In the next section I explore some of the effects of these processes of distinction and their associations with class and classed inequality in more detail.

6.3) Distinction, class and classed inequality

In this section I explore the relationship between the processes of distinction within the field, class and classed inequality. In 6.3.1) *Distinction classed* I show how the distinction of museums and occupational role are related to an assumed class of person. Indeed, distinction in the field and class are sometimes conflated, showing how one can be a proxy of the other. In 6.3.2) *Distinction unclassed* I show the unequal way in which museums and individuals benefit differently from processes of distinction. This could be seen as a form of 'classed' inequality and yet it is not talked about in the language of class. Indeed there is a potential misrecognition of power at play.

6.3.1) Distinction classed

Whilst I showed in the previous Chapter (5.3.1) that class as a generic construct was often confused and difficult to know, when it came to distinctions within the field, class was often talked about with ease. Participants made judgments of the class of people who worked in certain museums or did certain roles, both explicitly but also implicitly, showing the taken-for-granted nature of these as proxies for class. As argued in Chapter Five, these discursive processes reveal something of how both class is assumed and also how the field is constructed.

Participants aligned a version of class, as a person's background, with the distinction of certain institutions. In some cases this alignment was an explicit connection - a reflection that these institutions were more likely to be staffed by a certain 'class' of person. Sometimes it was a more implicit association, calling upon a taken-for-granted assumption of the classed nature of certain museums. I illustrate these alignments below

I think there's a difference between art museums and museums. Galleries in general. And I think, I work in an art gallery and I think there's an assumption, and I think it's still true, that people who work in galleries, are from a relatively privileged background. (Focus group participant, Leeds)

I'm from Birmingham … I went to grammar school… I was always the posh kid on the bus who had to watch his voice so he didn't get hassle. Then I eventually ended up at the Courtauld postgraduate, and now I work at the Royal Academy. And obviously, I was seen as sort of an amusingly, slightly common person in those settings. (Focus group participant, London)

These extracts illustrate the association between class and institution. In the first extract, the speaker makes a clear distinction between art galleries and museums basing this on the class of the people who work in them (both assumed and "*true*"). Art galleries are equated with a higher class, class here constructed as an individual's family ("*privileged background*"). Class was also aligned with specific institutions, as in the second extract. The speaker here tells a story, describing being too posh in their hometown (Birmingham) but not posh enough in their work setting - the Courtauld and Royal Academy. It hence positions these institutions as particularly posh, and constructs class as a matter of being "posh" or "common". The meaning of this story rested upon, and was reinforced by, a level of shared understanding within the focus group, who needed to know the "poshness" of these institutions. The use of the word "obviously" and the laughter of others when hearing the story, suggests the classed nature of these galleries was a commonly held construction within the field.

The alignment of class and institution was also constructed as a dimension of place. This can be seen above (the regional accent of Birmingham perhaps being seen as *"amusingly"* common) and was noted in 5.3.3 where being from the North was equated to being working class. Indeed a common construction was that coming from the North or the regions was classed below coming from the South or a capital city. In the following extracts, one can see how these too are deployed explicitly and also implicitly.

P1 I'm really interested in how accents and where you're from plays a part in it, as well. But, I definitely think that different museums work differently, as well […]

P2 Because, having started at a national museum, then an independent, and then a local authority, it seems to me that it matters a lot more in national museums. In London. (Focus group participants, Leeds)

Very infrequently do they [recruiters looking for Museum Directors] go to the regions. It's people move around or they come in from Paris, or they come in from New York. But you never hear about, oh someone from Stockton-on-Tees is taking up a senior post at the V&A. (Focus group participant, Leeds)

These extracts illustrate how class is aligned with place, and how this is then linked to positions within the field. In the first, accents are constructed as a proxy of class and are seen to matter in certain institutional contexts more than others (i.e. nationals as opposed to local authority). This again suggests an alignment between the distinction of an institution (e.g. national, local) and the class of people who work there. In the second extract, whilst not explicitly "classed", coming from a particular geographical background is seen to matter in terms of getting a position of distinction (i.e. a senior post at the V&A). Hence coming from a capital city (Paris or New York) is favoured over a Northern town in the UK (Stockton on Tees). What is interesting is that career and background are conflated ("*they come in from")*, or least it is not clear if the speaker means where someone has been working, or where they grew up.

As well as class and distinction being aligned in terms of institution, this was also the case in terms of occupational role, and again these were deployed explicitly and implicitly. Hence certain occupational roles were seen to be performed by a certain "class" of person. This was a common construction as it was one I explicitly sought within focus groups or interviews, when I would ask if there was a link between the field-hierarchies and class. Invariably, people made an association between roles higher up the hierarchy and people from a certain class.

As you go up the museum hierarchy, yes, it is more and more middle-class. Curators are definitely middle-class and so are directors and, perhaps most importantly, museum boards, and committees. …museum boards seem to be composed of the famous, titled and rich. (Interviewee, Freelance Researcher)

This extract was typical of the responses I received. It reinforces the hierarchical construction of the field and aligns hierarchy, distinction and class. Invariably roles higher up the hierarchy were seen to be performed by people with a higher class. In this

extract, the speaker suggests a continuous process ("*As you go up the museum hierarchy")*, so that those at the very top ("*perhaps most importantly museum boards")* have a significant amount of recognition ("*famous, titled")* and also economic capital *("rich").*

The close alignment of distinction and class was such that these constructions were sometimes deployed in a taken-for-granted way. Hence the role effectively "classed" the person. This was evidenced sporadically across the data though were more easily applied to roles at the top and the bottom of the hierarchy;

> *I can't imagine that many museum directors will live in an area that's close to many non-visitors.* (Chair, MA Conference Debate)

> *There's a lot of working-class people that work in museums, but they work in support services, they work in kitchens, they work as security guards.* (Audience member, MA Conference Debate)

These two extracts, both from the MA Conference Debate on Social Mobility, illustrate the conflation of occupational role with class of person; in that one classes the other. In the first extract the Chair invokes a classed divide between Museum Directors and non-visitors (earlier in the debate non-visitors had been described as low-income[17]). It assumes the class of a person able to do a Directorial role, as socially and geographically distinct from those on lower incomes, an assumption that is not contested within this debate. The second extract similarly conflates person with occupation. It suggests not only that certain roles (e.g. "*support services", " work in kitchens", "security guards")* are done by a certain class of person, but that the role classes these people **as** *"working-class people"*, whether they are or not. These illustrate how class is uncritically 'read off' the occupation of a person.

Class constructed as a property of person then, whether it is family background, where they grew up, accent or money, was often aligned with field-level distinction, here the institution and the job. Certain institutions and occupational, often those at top and bottom of a hierarchy, were seen to be occupied by people of a certain class. These

[17] Non-visitors were constructed by the Chair of the Debate as follows "*Over 50% of people have visited a museum at least once in the last year. But the gap between those from low incomes and higher incomes in participation is wider than ever".* This was a reference to the *Taking Part* survey which tracks the correlation between demographics and cultural participation in the UK, including museums.

constructions were deployed explicitly and implicitly to the extent that distinction and class were often conflated. Within these processes classed inequality is assumed to be the outcome of certain people having more capital than others. However, what is less apparent in these discussions is the way that museums as institutions benefit from processes of distinction in a way that individuals do not. I turn to this next.

6.3.2) Distinction unclassed

In this section I consider how museums and individuals benefit differently from processes of distinction. I show how those museums higher up the hierarchy (e.g. nationals) are able to capitalise on their distinction economically e.g. securing funding, generating exhibition sales, or by paying lower wages to their staff. By contrast, individuals acquiring a occupational role with distinction (e.g. becoming a curator or working for a national) are seen to lose out economically e.g. paying for qualifications, volunteering or being paid lower wages. Whilst, from one lens (e.g. a labour market value/Marxist one) this could be described as classed, participants did not describe it as such.

For museums a benefit of having high levels of distinction is the opportunity to convert this to economic capital. As we have seen in 6.1.2, the discourse of *A collections meritocracy*, is deployed to legitimise the status of museums. Alongside this, as discussed in Chapter Five, museums are required by government to seek "greater enterprise" (Mendoza, 2017, p. 37) now that public funds are diminished. Within this context, the ability of national museums to capitalise on their distinction – in ways that other museums couldn't – was seen as entirely legitimate;

> *I think there's a celebrity pieces thing. I think where the nationals have it easy […]because you have those things in your collections, and BM doing a Rodin and Parthenon exhibition is an absolute genius thing. The Parthenon marbles are usually for free, now they're charging £15 to see. I love the exhibition, I'm not criticising them for one second, but you just have the ability to just do that. […] Like, literally no one else can do that.* (Focus group participant, London)

> *Its significant amount of money that goes into nationals and rightly so. So, they have been buffered.* (Interviewee, Professional Body)

In the first extract, the speaker describes how a national museum can generate economic capital *("charging £15"*) from the distinction of their collections (*"celebrity pieces", "usually for free"*), by presenting them within a new exhibition format. The speaker both points out the relative privilege in this position (*"Like, literally no one else can do that*") but also lends legitimacy to this (*"I love the exhibition*" "*I'm not criticising them for a moment*"). They imply that the museum is simply following an imperative to generate income. In the second extract the speaker is talking about the squeeze on museum funding and points out how much funding goes into national museums ("*a significant amount*"), which they argue is justified ("*and rightly so*"). In both cases the ability of a museum to capitalise economically on their distinction is constructed as both a particular and legitimate privilege of being national.

However, for occupational roles constructed as having most distinction (e.g. curator), there was no corresponding opportunity to maximise economic returns; indeed quite the reverse. Those positions that had the highest distinction were talked about as having relatively low economic capital (i.e. salary) as highlighted in below;

> *Curators wield a lot of power within an organisation, but it's not reflected in their bank balance. (Focus* group participant, Leeds)

> *It's a luxury what we [curators] do. I mean I get paid so little. (*Focus group participant, Bristol)

These two extracts illustrate this relationship suggesting that on the one hand, the curatorial position confers certain privileges (*"wield a lot of power"; "it's a luxury"*) whilst on the other, it is low paid. Indeed the second extract suggests it is the low pay that makes the job a luxury, implying perhaps only certain people can afford to do this. Indeed, being in a position where one can earn a higher salary may mean sacrificing a level of distinction:

> *There are fundraisers who earn more and fundraisers are more likely to be able to set up a new management team. But in a funny way, I think in terms of status, curators might be a bit higher.* (Focus group participant, London)

This extract illustrates how having greater responsibility and higher salaries is not equivalent to distinction. And vice versa. The curiousness of this positioning is commented on ("*in a funny way"*), implying a normative assumption of how a hierarchy might be constructed (i.e. distinction = authority and salary). It suggests that whilst a

disavowal of 'the market' and hence immediate economic rewards might benefit museums, positioning them as trusted and non-profit making stewards of valuable artefacts in legitimate need of funding, it may not benefit individuals, constructing their distinction as reward enough.

Indeed, the unequal benefits between institution and individual, can be seen clearly when it comes to matters of employment. Here, those museums with most distinction can maximise the returns on their distinction by paying less and asking for more:

> *A friend of mine has just taken a job at Tate Britain and she says she's taken a massive cut in salary, just because she wanted to work for the Tate.* (Focus group participant, Bristol)

> *In large organisations where everybody wants to go and work, you can raise the bar even higher to say, actually … if I want an Assistant Curator and I've got 200 people that are applying for that one job, that's realistic 200-1 […] I am going to get them to do all this […]. I won't have had to give them any training, they probably can work by themselves so I don't need to then monitor them and guess what, we get better return on investment.* (Interviewee, Professional Body).

These extracts here illustrate how certain museums are constructed as more attractive places to work because of their distinction ("*she wanted to work for the Tate" "large organisations where everybody wants to work*"). As a result they can potentially ask for more in return, ("*get them to do all this")* and give less in return ("*taken a massive cut in salary" "won't have to give them any training, don't need to monitor them'*). The first extract hints at this being unfair, or at least worthy of comment. The second, takes a more pragmatic view using a 'market' discourse (i.e. *return on investment*) to justify the museum's decision. Neither explicitly describe this as a form of 'classed' inequality, which if seen through a Marxian lens could arguably be seen as such; a form of 'capitalist exploitation' in a market where capital is distinction.

Museums and individuals thus benefit unequally from processes of distinction, an inequality that whilst could theoretically (from a Marxian lens) be described as classed, is not (at least not within this data). Indeed the ability of museums to benefit economically from their distinction is seen as legitimate in a market where funding has become difficult to obtain. It suggests a hegemonic power dynamic between employer and employee as an

important, but unacknowledged, aspect of how inequalities in both distinction and class are constructed. Here, the discourses *A collections meritocracy* and *Distinguishing knowledge*, can be seen as having discursive power in legitimating the needs of the museum and the field (i.e. *Keeping Museums Special*) above that of the individual.

Summary

The above discussion has shown how class and classed inequality are constructed in relation to processes of distinction within the field of museum work. Class as a property of an individual e.g. as background, as money or as place was often aligned with distinction in the field. Hence, positions with museums and occupational roles with greater distinction were aligned with people from "a privileged background", "famous, titled or rich" or coming from New York or Paris. Positions of lower distinction were aligned with coming from regional towns, living in a particular place or just "being" working class. Background and place were thus important ways by which class was constructed. By contrast, the unequal way in which museums and individuals were able to benefit from distinction, the former from the latter, was not necessarily seen as classed. Class as a dimension of an employer-employee relationship; a them and us construction is thus not apparent within these classing processes.

6.4) Conclusion

In this chapter I considered how class and classed inequality are constructed in relation to the distinctions within the field of museum work. I explored the discursive "processes of distinction" through which the museum field is legitimately hierarchised – by institutional type and occupational role. And I consider how constructions of class and classed inequality are related to these.

I describe two field-level discourses through which museums and occupational roles are distinguished: *A collections meritocracy*, which maintains a neutral valorisation of collections as a legitimate basis for distinguishing museums e.g. nationals over other museums. This discourse has the double effect of legitimising current levels of funding and also downplaying the economic basis on which some of these collections are founded, the latter aided by the use of a "historic" lens. It can thus be seen as a form of misrecognition. The discourse of *Distinguishing knowledge* is deployed to distinguish

occupational roles, through their ability to lend distinction to the field and to produce 'new', as opposed to facilitating existing, knowledge. These processes maintain the 'specialness" of the field (i.e. *Keep museums special*). In effect, these discourses problematise the celebrated discourse of inclusivity described in Chapter Five (e.g. *Museums Change Lives*), constructing a field which is defined by and values exclusivity.

As outlined in Chapter Five, a salient process in maintaining the distinction of museum work is by its disavowal of the market – or the pursuit of economic profit. However, a pursuit of public recognition, and increasingly media profile, is deployed as a way to legitimate distinction and a valued form of distinction in itself. Recognition thus represents a market of sorts. However, the pursuit of recognition needs to be balanced with distinguishing knowledge; *recognition for recognition's sake* can be seen to diminish distinction, as can be seen in 6.2.2, where participants downplayed the influence of fundraising, digital and marketing roles.

In contrast to Chapter Five, where generic discourses of class were seen to be confusing, participants were able to relate class to field-level distinctions with ease. Class, constructed as a person's social, economic or geographic background, was aligned, indeed conflated with distinction in the field – either museum type or occupational role. The unequal ways in which museum and individual benefitted from distinction however was not talked about as classed. Hence, as national museums were able to convert distinction into economic capital (e.g. funding, paying less), individuals often acquired distinction at cost (e.g. cost of qualifications, earning less). This suggests that, in everyday terms, class is more likely to be seen as a property of person rather than the power dynamic between employer and employee.

The power dynamic between employer and employee has a bearing on how career is constructed and class and classed inequality related to this. In the next chapter I explore how people talked about "playing for distinction", the way in which the discourse of career constructed ways of having (capital) and being (an ideal habitus) and how participants constructed their own class in relation to this journey.

Chapter Seven: Playing for distinction

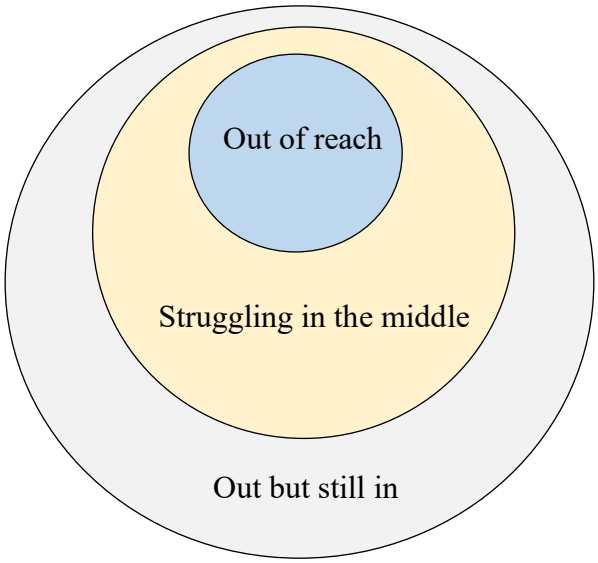
In the last chapter I explored how people who work in UK museums construct distinctions within their field. I discussed how museums and occupational roles are hierarchised according to the discourses of *A collections meritocracy, Distinguishing knowledge,* and *A market for recognition.* I showed how class is constructed as homologous with distinction in the field, and that whilst there is inequality between the ways museums and individuals benefit from these processes of distinction, this is not described as classed.

In this chapter I turn to how people construct the museum career, or in Bourdieu's language, the rules of the game (Bourdieu, 1984, 1993). In *Games of distinction* (7.1) I outline how talk of career delineates three particular games within museums; *Struggling for distinction,* the *Out of reach* and the *Out but still in*. In *Ways of being: an ideal habitus* (7.2) I explore the construction of an ideal habitus as '*distinguished by dedication*' and '*distinguished by enterprise*' and in *Ways of having: valued capital* (7.3) I show the types of capital constructed as valuable for a museum career, including distinguishing capital (at cost), and discursive capital (underpinned by confidence). Lastly in *Knowing and showing class* (7.4), I show how discourses of career and social mobility can makes class difficult to see, whilst career as a narrative methodology makes class easier to see.

7.1) The game of distinction

As discussed in Chapter Six the museum field is constructed as a hierarchical space in which museums with the 'best' collections (i.e. national museums) and occupational roles with most *Distinguishing knowledge* (i.e. specialist curators) are positioned at the top. These hierarchies map out positions of value, and many participants talked about wanting to either work for a national museum (as discussed in Chapter Six) or become a curator (as discussed below). However, as I will show in this Chapter, the routes to positions of distinction were not straightforward and not everyone was playing quite the same game. Indeed, in talking of career, participants invoked implicit distinctions around and between games which I illustrate below.

Diagram C: The three games of distinction



As the diagram illustrates, participants constructed three particular games. Most of the participants in this research were playing the game of *Struggling in the middle*. This constructed a normative discourse of career; a game distinguished by some form of progression or ambition, of getting in and getting on. A second game was one which was *Out of reach*, a game which participants invoked at the edges of their ambition and which was played by others (e.g. Directors or superstar curators). And, a third game was that of *Out but still in*, constructed as one in which people were not seeking to acquire 'better' jobs, but rather to make the best of the ones they were doing.

The edges of these games were not fixed. Indeed the game of *Struggling in the middle* was a 'struggle' not only to acquire a specialist role (e.g. curator or educator) but to make other roles special too e.g. digital, fundraiser or marketing. Within these struggles, the term '*museum professional'* was deployed as a high-stakes and yet highly contested boundary-manager. The term was frequently used in the field (there is a group of *Emerging Museum Professional* regional networks; the annual MA conference was described as an event for *senior 'museum professionals'* and the group set up in 2018, Museum as Muck (see Discussion) described itself as a networking group for *working class museum professionals)*. And yet the term was rarely explicated or clear. In later interviews, I began to ask people what a *museum professional* was, and how did they know:

> *[Museum professionals are] people who work in a Museum, I don't describe myself as a Museum professional. Perhaps because I'm at the beginning of my career.* (Interviewee, Volunteer)

> *[A museum professional is] someone who works in museums as a career choice, rather than on a single job/short term basis. This would be in any role, where they have chosen to work in a museum specifically… I hold a post-grad in Heritage Management, but […] I do not consider this the definition.* (Interviewee, Museum Director)

These extracts illustrate the looseness, and yet the stakes attached to claiming the term. Both construct it through the lens of career; the former suggesting those at the beginning of their career (like the speaker) are "*perhaps*" less entitled to claim it, whilst the latter suggests that anyone, but only those 'dedicated' to a museum career can claim it. People who just happen to be working in a museum on a transactional basis *("on a single job/short term basis"*) cannot. The latter also speaks to, and counters, an assumption that a museum professional is defined by having a specific museum studies qualification (which I consider further in 7.3).

Whilst contested, being able to claim 'museum professional' status distinguished those playing the game of *Struggling in the middle* from the game of *Out, but still in.* This describes a game in which participants are not pursuing a museum career but are still 'in' the museum. It was a game for which I had few participants and hence was largely constructed by others not playing it, as in the extract above (i.e. distinguishing those who have made the museum a "*career choice*" versus those working on a "*single job/short term basis")*. The few players I did have were from people who gained distinction not by changing job, but by re-valorising the job that they did:

> *Students think if they are the front of house they can be a curator, automatically. They said: Well it's only a stepping-stone, I hated that, it's only a stepping-stone. I thought you don't know the job that I do, don't you think of, dream of, knocking it (*Focus group participant, Manchester)

This speaker (a museum porter) resists having their work de-valued through the lens of career ('*it's only a stepping-stone")*. They re-valorise their role by invoking pride in their work (*"you don't know the job that I do*") and hence their 'game' is not to move away from it, but to asserts its value in its own right.

The game of *Struggling in the middle* was also distinguished by a game that seemed *Out of reach*. Hence, Directorial roles, particularly those of National Museums were commonly constructed as *Out of reach*, a game played by others. Similarly being a specialist curator was also constructed as *Out of reach* for many. *Out of reach-ness* was also applied to certain ways of being and having which I describe further in this chapter. However, *Out of reach-ness* was also not a fixed boundary and depended on whose career was being constructed as this extract below shows:

> *I can't move into directing a national museum because I don't have an art history background and have been working in the regions.* (Interviewee, Museum Director (of a Regional Museum))

This participant was already in a position (i.e. Museum Director) that may have appeared *Out of reach* to many others. And yet they describe here a position which was nonetheless O*ut of reach* to them e.g. moving from directing a regional to a national museum. It shows how the discourse of career constructs a never-ending pursuit of *Out of reach-ness.*

These three 'games' have a classing effect in and of themselves as some people chose to 'struggle', some 'struggle' better than others (and indeed do not have to struggle so hard) whilst some chose not to 'struggle' at all, or at least not by these rules. For the most part, the data in this Chapter comes from those playing the game of *Struggling in the middle* though I also highlight where this then bumps up against the other two games. Indeed it is potentially a fear of falling that has a disciplining effect, keeping people *Struggling* and bound by the rules of the game. It is to these that I turn to next.

7.2) Ways of being; the ideal habitus

In this section I consider the discourses by which normative ways of being, or an ideal habitus, is constructed as a route to distinction. In *The dedicated habitus* (7.2.1): I highlight how an ideal habitus is constructed as one of dedication; determined by a temporal and emotional commitment to the field, a sticking with it come what may. In *The enterprising habitus* (7.2.2): I show how an ideal habitus is increasingly constructed through individualised, neoliberal discourses of enterprise and resilience. These discursive processes obscure the value of economic capital (as reward or requirement

for pursuing a career) locating career distinction in the personal qualities of the individual.

7.2.1) The dedicated habitus

Participants (particularly those playing the game of *Struggling in the middle*) constructed the museum career through an ideal habitus of dedication to the field. This was demonstrated by temporal and emotional commitment to the field as distinguished from a short-term, transactional and primarily economic relationship (i.e. earning a living). However within a funding climate of fewer permanent jobs, increased competition and precarious contracts, this ideal becomes difficult to live up to. Not only are those with less economic capital less able to show dedication, but this ideal of dedication has become an end it itself removed from the practical reality of earning a living.

A dedicated habitus was demonstrated by one's temporal commitment to the museum field. This was indicated by amount of time spent in the field e.g. "She's worked in the sector for 26 years" (Speaker, MA Conference) and ideally presented as a continuous trajectory as indicated below:

> *There's a retention issue for people who self-identify as diverse who come into the sector. And then they might leave at mid-career point not reach leadership level because actually it's really tough to navigate a career in the sector.* (Speaker, MA Conference)

The speaker here, whilst focussing on the issue of diversity in the field, assumes a dedicated habitus to underline this as a problem. A good and normative outcome is implied as staying and pursuing a bounded trajectory (*"reaching leadership level"*), whilst a negative one is not being able to stay dedicated (*"might leave at mid-career*"). This reinforces the idea of a museum career as a temporally and spatially bounded practice, defined by staying in the field. It also carries with it an implied long-term relationship between the individual and the field, a promise of future benefits in return for dedication.

As well as being defined by a sense of time, the dedicated habitus was defined by one's emotional commitment, a sense of passion for the field. This was a common self-

description amongst participants. When asked how they started their career, many described a love for either their subject and, for the museum experience and space. This love may have been sparked by an inspirational figure, TV programme, by their own studies or by visiting museums as a child as illustrated below:

> *I've always enjoyed history […] I love the story telling, the magic of analysing sources […]I guess the notion that the past is a foreign country is an exciting one – it's about discovery and exploration!* (Interviewee, Collections Registrar)

> *Museums have always been part of my upbringing. Yes, so I've got goose bumps because I love them so much* (Focus group participant, London)

These extracts illustrate the ways participants construct a strong emotional attachment to their chosen career. The vocabulary of "*dream", "love", "magic*" contributes to the construction of a passion, whilst the terms "*exciting" "discovery*" and *"exploration*" describe an emotionally meaningful adventure. The last extract describes having an actual emotional sensation ("*I've got goose bumps*") whilst talking about their love of museums.

This construction of dedication as one of time and also emotional connection, was further reinforced by the idea of sticking with it, come what may. This was sometimes expressed as a fear of leaving the sector, as described below:

> *I think there's a real concern that the sector is so competitive that if you leave it, if only for a few months, it's difficult to get back in. […]I'm looking to leave Birmingham … I'm struggling with finding a new job … and feel trapped in my current situation for fear of losing my footing in the sector. (*Interviewee, Collections Registrar)

The "*fear of losing my footing*" described here may well have material roots and consequences, informed by people's own experiences of finding work, particularly in an increasingly competitive field. However, it may also arise from this idea that a dedicated habitus is distinguished by staying in the field however difficult this may be. This construction can be seen in the report below:

> *England's museum sector currently employs around 33,000 people who work hard to ensure the quality of the museums. They are the ones taking the strain when funding is tight. They are the ones working so hard and taking on more responsibilities. Working alongside them is a force of thousands of dedicated*

and passionate volunteers, giving their invaluable time, skills and commitment. ((Mendoza Report, 2017)

This extract here is ostensibly depicted as a tribute to the 33,000 people working in museums, noting their contribution *("working so hard*") and sacrifice in the face of reduced funding ("*taking the strain", "taking on more responsibilities*"). However, it augments the construction of the dedicated habitus as one willing to battle on regardless of the difficulties. The positioning of this alongside a tribute to volunteers, reminds the reader how many people (a *"force*") are willing to make this contribution as a sacrifice of "*their valuable time*" for nothing, as well as the type of people willing to do this ("*dedicated*" and "*passionate*"). Dedication here then is constructed as *Keeping Museums Special,* ensuring their *'quality*" is maintained no matter how hard you have to work or how little you earn.

Whilst a habitus and career defined by its dedication (temporally and emotionally) to a particular field may not seem so extraordinary, it is worth reflecting on the classing implications of this construction. The 'long term-ness' of career is often seen to distinguish it from being "*just a job*" – a straightforward transactional relationship of pay for labour (and hence which also distinguishes those *Struggling* from those *Out but still in*). This distinction is outlined here;

There's a difference between careers and roles isn't there? Because careers implies that it's a longer-term sense of... you know there's something about at my age we had careers and these days you have lots of different jobs, don't you? People move around a lot so I think that's different. (Interviewee, Funding Body)

The speaker here reflects on how career is different to a job; the former defined by commitment ("*a longer-term sense of...*") whilst the latter is less stable (*"people move around a lot"*). That people may be motivated by just wanting a job or a role, rather than a long-term future in museums, is used in a classing way. This is evidenced by these exchanges below:

Like we just said that people don't necessarily have a career for life anymore. Transferring between different sectors is much more common

INT: Even for specialist roles like curators, do you think?

Much less so. I'm thinking of others. For example people working on digital projects. That would be much more transferable (Interviewee, Funding Body)

> *In London a lot of the cleaners are working for obscure cleaning companies that totally exploit, in particular women and migrant workers. So, what I would say is… do they want to work in museum? And that's a way, to become a cleaner in a museum? I think it's more like, they need a job.* (Interviewee, Trade Union)

The two examples above both class roles, and potentially the people doing them, by their level of dedication to the field; the former suggesting that digital roles are less committed to the sector than specialist roles, whilst the latter suggests the same of cleaners. They thus both reinforce an "us and them" boundary between those that are dedicated and those that are not. However, they both use different discourses to deploy this boundary. The first extract uses the language of 'transferability' versus dedication as something of a choice in a context where there is no such thing as a career for life. The second extract (from a trade union official) uses the political language of industrial relations and 'exploitation' to construct lack of dedication not as a choice, but as having no choice; women or migrant workers simply need work. These differences bring to light the way a normative career discourse constructs choice and responsibility as an individual affair, obscuring the power relationship between employee and employer. It implies that the *Out but still in* are playing this game through choice.

Furthermore, the increased competitiveness of the field made a dedicated habitus difficult to sustain for those with less economic resources to rely on. Indeed, my overriding impression of reading participants' career narratives (particularly those crafted through email interviews) was one of chaos, as people desperately attempted to maintain a museum career, through short term contracts, whilst earning enough money to live on. For some this frustrated their sense that they were indeed pursuing a museum career at all;

> *I can't afford not to work so I have taken jobs only tangentially related to my work in order to keep paying rent, and often have to take the first role offered rather than ideally waiting for more natural and targeted career progressions.* (Interviewee, Events Manager)

> *One of the main things that has made this journey difficult is that I've sometimes had to put employment first because I need to think about paying rent before I*

can think about what may be best for my career (i.e. internships, volunteering). (Interviewee, Front of house)

There is clearly a material implication for classed inequality here, in that those who can afford to stay in the field, do so. Whilst those who can't, don't, and end up appearing less than dedicated. There is also a discursive effect. Both the above extracts distinguish between work that earns money ("*keep paying rent*") and that which furthers their career (*"related to my work" "best for my career"*). Indeed the second extract makes a clear distinction between the economic return of "employment" and the economic cost of a museum "career". These extracts illustrate two things; they emphasise the way having a dedicated habitus distinguishes between the game of *Struggling in the middle* (i.e. wanting a museum career) and the game of *Out but still in* (i.e. working in a museum but not wanting a museum career). They also illustrate the costs of playing the former, here constructed as a sacrifice of the ability to pay the rent.

The construction of a dedicated habitus also relates the individual struggle within the field to that of the field itself - that of *Keeping Museums Special as* described in Chapter Six. By demonstrating a temporal and emotional commitment to the field, museum workers demonstrate their commitment to *Keeping Museums Special*. The dedicated habitus may belie a naturalised and perhaps unremarkable assumption as to what is career is - being bound by a series of roles within an occupational field – but it has a classing effect sorting those who are playing a particular game into those who are not. It is also classed, in that those with less economic capital find it difficult to achieve. This dynamic becomes amplified in a competitive field. Indeed a museum career has become less about gaining security and 'prospects' for the individual and appears to be more about demonstrating one's ability to shore up the security and prospects of the field. In the next section I discuss how this is augmented by a discourse of enterprise.

7.2.2) The enterprising habitus

Alongside dedicated, the ideal habitus was also constructed through the discourse of the market and enterprise (i.e. *risk-taking, confident, flexible* and *resilient*). This 'enterprising' habitus was mostly championed by those in positions of authority, for example professional bodies, funding bodies and university departments, rather than by individual museum workers. In this the 'enterprising' habitus had something of a

didactic and pragmatic quality – a heeding by 'career advice-givers' that the museum career is increasingly competitive and difficult and this is because of the wider situation museums find themselves in through no fault of their own (i.e. a difficult funding climate and a political imperative to be enterprising).

The enterprising habitus was constructed in two parts; the first by the positioning of a museum career as increasingly the responsibility of the individual rather than the employer. This was constructed as a change from an older approach where the museum career was contoured by the organisation in which the individual worked:

> *I used to work in the British Museum years ago and I sort of came up, I made the transition from the shop floor and practical support work into management in the British Museum. Which at that time in the 80s was quite progressive in a sort of paternalistic way and supporting people that didn't have academic qualifications and in some cases didn't have, you know, even GCSE qualifications and there was a lot of support within the structures.* (Audience Member, MA Conference Debate*)*

This extract illustrates this older form of career, a progression developed within one organisation, from front of house to a more senior, back of house role. The speaker, whilst noting its rarity for the times ("*was quite progressive*"), did also construct it as pretty rare now, situated it in a particular time ("*in the 80s*" "*years ago*") and place (*"the British Museum*"). By raising it within a discussion of social mobility they remind the audience how things used to be, and potentially could be again. A more current view of career was this one below:

> *I do think the sector is constrained by thinking around careers in a very sort of 1975 approach. So, I do a workshop that says whose career is it anyway because my career is mine; it's not the institution's. I'm not likely to stay in an institution for the whole of my career, it's not going to happen.* (Interviewee, Professional Body)

The speaker (a career advice-giver) suggests that thinking an institution owes you a career, or even a secure job is an outdated way of thinking ("*sort of 1975 approach*"). Their approach is instead presented as a contemporary and pragmatic take on something of a double bind; as people can no longer expect the security of staying in one place *("it's not going to happen*"), they can no longer expect their employer to invest in them. Rather they must invest in their own career development i.e. to be enterprising.

The enterprising habitus was also constructed through an emphasis on those personal qualities suited to negotiating a competitive marketplace i.e. enterprising, risk-taking, confident, flexible and resilient. This was particularly evident in the *Character Matters* report; a survey of skills required by the museum workforce conducted in 2016 and referenced by participants in Phase One of the data collection (see Chapter Four). The report privileged personal qualities over knowledge or work-related skills; indeed as evidenced by its title:

> *A number of key 'personal qualities' emerge from the literature review as priorities for the workforce such as conscientiousness, optimism, motivation, self-efficacy, persistence, curiosity, creativity and the ability to learn and collaborate. These will all be important to a museum workforce that is experiencing significant organisational change and where it will be important to be more entrepreneurial, take more risks, and be more creative.* (*Character Matters* (BOP Consulting, 2016, p. 1))

This extract illustrates how the report borrows from an academic psychological discourse (e.g. *"self-efficacy"* as opposed to the more everyday term of confidence), using academic credentials (i.e. "*a literature review*") to lend weight to its recommendations. As part of its data collection, it also used *"instruments"* from academic psychology to measure personal qualities amongst respondents, legitimising its findings as basis for action. This gives the report some discursive power as can be seen here:

> *Things like personal qualities like confidence for example, risk-taking. So in the report you'll see where we're seen to be low, scoring low as a sector, and what we need to score higher in. (*Interviewee, Funding Body*)*

This extract shows how the academic psychological discourse of the report was also adopted by an interviewee ("*we/re low scoring as a sector*") here presented as factual data. The speaker is from a funding body and also has responsibility for workforce development. Indeed, they, along with two other interviewees (one from a professional body and one a membership body) commissioned this report and are working together to implement its recommendations, including setting a mentoring scheme. It illustrates how the discourse of an academic field gains power within a field of practice. However, despite the use of academic and scientific language, there is little critical examination

within the report that developing skills such as risk-taking, will benefit either the sector or the individual.

The championing of a 'enterprising' habitus has particular material and discursive consequences for class and classed inequality. By asking people to invest their own personal resources to develop valued skills and experience it makes certain types of role more *Out of reach* for those with less capital:

> *I think working in collections and curatorial work or exhibitions is particularly difficult as it can be seen as highly skilled and practical experience is required. There is a lack of capacity within organisations for on the job training to help develop potential candidates or internal staff. Skills and experience must be demonstrated at interview.* (Interviewee, Curator)

In this extract the speaker echoes the individualised responsibility to bring knowledge, skills and experience to the table. They construct this as largely legitimate, framing museums as unable – presumably because of their own precarious funding situation – rather than necessarily unwilling, to invest in staff. They also illustrate therefore how specialist work ("*collections and curatorial work or exhibitions")* is then more likely to be *Out of reach* for many people due to the high level of skill and knowledge one needs to acquire oneself. The focus on this as an individualised quality obscures this as an unlevel playing field. Those with more, are more likely to win at the game of distinction, whilst those without may get stuck, as illustrated below:

> *You study Art History or whatever… and your first stage, especially if you haven't got the networks, will be to get a job as anything in the museum and therefore, it's in retail, [the] café, as a gallery assistant, a cleaner in the hope that you may evolve.[…]And before you know it, you've been here five years, you may have your museum degree, but you haven't got … that experience of looking after collections, of creating exhibitions. (*Interviewee, Trade Union)

This extract illustrates a common construction among participants - that the strategy of getting 'in' to the museum field by starting at the bottom of an organisational hierarchy is a risky one. An individual cannot gain valued experience ("*looking after collections*") simply by working in the museum. The speaker implies that it is thus those who can bring certain forms of capital *(e.g. social capital such as "the networks")* that are more likely to win at the game of distinction, whilst those without are stuck in the game of *Out but still in.*

The focus on the 'enterprising' habitus also has a discursive effect, obscuring class and classed inequality in two particular ways. The first is that it can be used to deflect from the need for economic capital, and reframing career success as a personal endeavour. This discursive process was very evident in the career narrative of a speaker at the MA Conference Debate on Social Mobility. She talked of a background, which while poor economically, was rich in enterprise:

> *My father particularly was desperately poor … [he] worked incredibly hard as did my mum, she was the queen of thrift. She could make magic out of nothing from clothing to food, it was extraordinary.* (Speaker, MA Conference Debate)

Indeed, while her parents had very little economically, they were able to pass on the skills to manage and make something out of nothing; the skills of the entrepreneur:

> *The gift really they [parents] gave us was this sense of hard work and thrift and determination. […] They gave us a sense of confidence in trying something new.* (Speaker, MA Conference Debate)

> *And I found as each job I went into I found myself drawn to the organisation that perhaps couldn't pay very much. You know you could use your thriftiness, but you also were in a position to make a difference though sheer grit and hard work.* (Speaker, MA Conference Debate)

These extracts re-frame a lack of economic capital into an opportunity to accumulate valued personal qualities – here constructed as enterprising characteristics: "*hard work", "thrift", "determination", "confidence",* and *"sheer grit".* This 'culturepreneurial' narrative – accumulating cultural capital by entrepreneurial means – connects her mother's ability to make magic out of nothing, with the speakers ability to also make magic out of nothing for the organisations she works for. It shows how 'social magic' can turn lack into an advantage, here diminishing economic capital as requirement for success not by someone who had it but by someone who did not.

The focus on a 'enterprising' habitus distracts from wider structural and political issues of inequality. These can be seen at the level of employee relations. Indeed, *Character Matters* did note some dissatisfaction amongst museum workers over working conditions and career stagnation;

> *Increasingly the workforce is asked to do more, with less. Many of the workforce remain in the same role in the past three years however over a third report an increased level of responsibilities with no corresponding increase in pay (Character Matters* (BOP Consulting, 2016, p. 24))

These findings came from its own survey findings. However they were written out of the conclusions which focussed only on the need to develop the right qualities within the workforce;

> *The challenge going forward is …how to recruit a more diverse workforce …including people with …the kinds of 'personal qualities' that are identified as assets in an environment that will likely increasingly emphasise adaptability, entrepreneurialism?* (*Character Matters, (BOP Consulting, 2016, p. 3)*)

Hence the report backs away from addressing one its own findings, that of low pay and increased workload, in favour of recommending the recruitment according to an enterprising habitus. It hence obfuscates the unequal and classed nature of the employment dynamic which underpins this i.e. that an individual takes the risk of the market, works harder, gets paid less which benefits the employer, here getting more for less.

The focus on the enterprising habitus thus has particular classing effects; materially it shifts the 'cost' of accumulating capital to the individual whilst discursively, it can diminish the importance of having capital in the first place (i.e. the true entrepreneur starts with nothing). And it also deflects from the power dynamic between employee-employer.

Summary

The discussion above highlights how the ideal habitus is constructed as both dedicated and enterprising. It illustrates how, as the field becomes more competitive, the power dynamic and discursive frame has shifted in favour of employers who can demand more and get more (i.e. harder work, higher qualified candidates) whilst individual workers can expect less and get less (i.e. lower pay, less employer training and development). These discourses also have particular effects for people with less economic capital, obscuring its value as a reward and as requirement, and also deflect from the employer-employee dynamic. In the next section, I look more closely at the types of capital

participants constructed as valuable, and the ways this was constructed as classed inequality.

7.3) Ways of having; valued capital

In this section I show how capital was constructed as valued in the context of a museum career, and how this then contributed to an understanding of classed inequality. Not surprisingly, in a field where distinction is demonstrated through specialist knowledge, (as outlined in (6.1)) particular forms of distinguishing capital were highly valued, particularly institutional capital - qualifications, particular types of experience and knowledge. However, this is acquired at cost (e.g. the cost of a postgraduate qualification, the cost of volunteering) a feature that many participants constructed as an often hidden form of classed inequality. And likewise, in a field where gaining recognition matters (as outlined in 6.2), then having the right sort of social and linguistic capital (which I describe here as 'discursive' capital) also counted – being able to network and promote one's work and oneself. This too was constructed as a form of classed inequality, again often hidden, as participants felt their class backgrounds gave them less confidence and that they were judged to have the 'wrong' accent. The explicit way in which this capital was constructed as classed was reinforced by a more implicit process; as certain forms of distinguishing and discursive capital were denied to some, and *Out of reach* to others. I illustrate these arguments below. In 7.3.1) *Distinguishing capital (at cost*): I outline the importance of having educational qualifications within the field and how the cost of acquiring these shifts and reinforces boundaries between the 'games'. In 7.3.2) *Discursive capital (underpinned by confidence).* I explore how having the 'right' language and communication skills are valorised, fungible and classed.

7.3.1) Distinguishing capital (at cost)

In a field distinguished by specialist knowledge, it is not surprising that having specialist qualifications was constructed as an important form of capital. The report described above, *Character Matters*, as noted in Chapter Five (5.3.2), found that 88% of its respondents had a first degree and 59% a postgraduate qualification (BOP Consulting, 2016). For curatorial roles participants talked about needing not only a first degree, but also a postgraduate – often a museum-specific - qualification:

> *I was soon finding an undergraduate degree was not enough to get a job in a museum, and that I would also need an MA in Museum Studies, as this is what the majority of job requirements were asking for (if not explicitly, having an MA can be a deciding factor between applicants I think).* (Interviewee, Front of House)

This extract echoes a common construction. Many participants felt the need to have a museums postgraduate qualification was a requirement to get in and get on, even if not explicitly asked for in recruitment adverts. And this was seen to be increasingly the case in an increasingly crowded market.

The value of this type of capital, as well as distinguishing a person from others, also appears to be as a way of signalling a dedicated habitus, a willingness to *Keep Museums Special*. Many complained about the quality of some of the postgraduate qualifications (as with museums, some were afforded higher status than others) arguing that they were of little practical use. Rather, they were constructed as a necessary route to demonstrate dedication:

> *I have now started a museum studies degree which I fully believe will not benefit my knowledge or ability in the market at all, and I think my current job that I have is much more beneficial. But, it doesn't give the tick box. So I've got to get it [the degree] anyway and paid £8,000 for it.* (Focus group participant, London)

As this participant suggests, they did not think the degree would give them any more knowledge or ability than they currently had. However, to them, it was worth investing substantial economic capital in order to gain the legitimation (*"the tick box"*) that this qualification would confer. In the extract below, the participant, despite having an MA in history, did not have a Museums Studies qualification, and struggled to gain entry:

> *Although I was shortlisted, I wasn't getting anywhere and often had feedback that other candidates … were better at understanding the language that museums expected to hear. This was incredibly frustrating, particularly as working full time in development for charities, I …was gaining really useful experience, which could easily be transferred to a museum role.* (Interviewee, Collections Registrar)

This participant suggests that a Museums Studies course may confer a particular discursive power ("*the language that museums expected to hear*") and hence act as a passport to an exclusive club. The participant here suggests this was considered more

important than the experience they had which could generate income for museums *("development for charities"*).

The need to acquire expensive qualifications was seen as a form of classed inequality; an inequality exacerbated by the individual bearing this cost themselves (or an individual's family). This was further exacerbated by the expectation that the qualification itself was not sufficient to gain access to a specialist job. Participants also talked about the increasing need for experience, often unpaid. Whilst the costs and benefits of volunteering were hotly debated by many participants, it was nonetheless an acknowledged, tried and tested route in. Combined with bearing the cost of a Masters, this struck many participants as a clear form of classed inequality.

> *I think a lot of the specialist jobs … conservator, curator…you have to be able to work for free for many months, years. So, perhaps you end up with a more privileged class of people who can afford to work for free.* (Focus group participant, London)

> *Everyone told me, you won't progress unless you get a postgraduate qualification. I did, but it cost me 20 grand. How many people can afford to do that, to go to the next step to becoming a curator? This is why I think there is a class divide between operations and collections.* (Focus group participant, Bristol)

In these extracts, the speakers make a clear connection between the, often hidden, need for economic capital ("*afford to work for free", "cost me £20 grand*") to acquire the distinguishing capital that counts *("months, years of work experience"* and *"a postgraduate qualification").* They voice a common complaint – that whilst money is not celebrated as an end in itself (see Chapter Six), it is nonetheless needed - thus challenging the idea that this is a meritocratic playing field. Indeed, they see this as both classed – enabling only those from a certain background ("*a more privileged class of people"*) to access specialist roles - and classing, meaning these roles are then effectively occupied by people from a certain background ("*a class divide between operations and collections*"). Even though participants are aware of this inequality, there is little they can do but play this particular game (i.e. *struggling for distinction*) either paying out the money ("*I did*") or accepting a lower status role. Again, as noted in

7.2.2, the individualised nature of this is taken-for-granted, and the employer as beneficiary is somewhat overlooked.

Alongside the explicit construction of classed inequality, was a more implicit hierarchisation (and hence further classing) of this capital. Some qualifications were classed as superior to others, largely due to their increasingly specialist (and hence distinguishing) status; as well as the institutional capital invested within it. Even for those who had gained a museum specific qualification, worked for free, and hence played the game to successfully become a curator, there were still certain types of capital and position that were still out of reach.

> *I would have loved to be a subject-specialist but I never would have been able to afford a PHD!* (Interviewee, Curatorial Assistant)

> *I am very interested in the early medieval period and wanted to pursue a career in this area, but it seemed like a pipe dream. Only four years later I was standing in the British Museum, training to be a curator, and holding pieces of this [Staffordshire] hoard, speaking to learned colleagues about their research on it. […]Though I have become more of a generalist curator, I am still excited and overwhelmed by objects such as these.* (Interviewee, Curator)

These extracts illustrate the classed hierarchy between being a specialist rather than a generalist curator. Both construct being a specialist of a certain subject as aspirational ("*would have loved" "seemed like a pipe dream*"). Both associate it with highly valorised forms of cultural capital ("*a PhD" "learned colleagues*"). Both also imbue it with a certain *Out of reach-ness* - the former due to cost of getting the PhD. The latter, whilst able to get close to learned colleagues at the British Museum, and indeed to hold pieces of the object that excites and overwhelms them ("*the Staffordshire Hoard*"), nonetheless falls short of achieving a level of specialist status ("*though I have become more of a generalist curator"*). They depict a never-ending 'classed elevator' where the most distinctive forms of capital are constantly *Out of reach*.

The value attached to, and cost of acquiring, distinguishing capital is reinforced by the playing of this game. For those struggling for the distinction of the museum career, there is little choice but to play. However, those not playing this particular game – those in the *Out but still in* game - can provide a different perspective on the way the game is

constructed. The extract below is from a museum porter, the participant who defended her job against only being a "*stepping-stone"* (see 7.1), and who here contributes an alternative view to the capital required:

> *""Oh they're educated so that's okay". No it's not okay there's the practical ability that goes with it, the experience.…This upstairs downstairs is an example. …the ladies …all went to try to be nurses in World War One, some did very well, some didn't do too well because they couldn't handle the dirt, anything human or otherwise. And yet it was the lady beyond the stairs that stayed at home. And yet if they'd have gone to war they'd have managed that a little bit differently because of their experience looking after them. So it's a bit of a wrong way around…*"(Focus group participant, Manchester)

Using the context of a historical crisis ("*World War One*"), the speaker challenges assumptions that distinction as capital or class ("*they're educated*" "*the ladies*") is sufficient for doing work that is needed (i.e. being able to "*handle the dirt*"). They thus re-articulate valued capital as usefulness ("*practical ability" "their experience looking after them"*), and implicitly challenge the discourse of *Distinguishing knowledge*. The speaker of this perspective has little discursive power to change the rules of the game. However her view gains particular currency within the pandemic of COVID-19. Within this crisis, it is the practical skills of delivery drivers, cleaners, and hospital workers that are keeping people safe, and which now have a higher profile and status than before. It brings us back to the broader context (i.e. this research, museums as a field, the pandemic in 2020) within which certain discourses gain power, hence illustrating the fluidity and situatedness of class and classed inequality as discursive constructs.

The struggles over gaining and naming distinguishing capital are thus reinforced by the playing of the game, at least the game of *Struggling in the middle*. Participants construct this as an increasingly difficult and expensive game to play and hence certain forms of capital and position are *Out of reach*. By contrast those not playing the game question the assumptions of value on which this capital is based. The primacy of a particular form of distinguishing capital (e.g. specialist qualifications) echoes the way in which the field is constructed. In the next section I highlight how the *Market for Recognition* discourse shapes another form of struggled-over capital, that of Discursive capital.

7.3.2) Discursive capital (underpinned by confidence)

Alongside the need for distinguishing capital, participants also constructed the need for the right amount and type of discursive capital – a term I have used to describe the particular combination of social and linguistic capital required to promote one's work and also oneself (see also terms 1.5 in Introduction). Within a field increasingly shaped by a *Market for recognition* (Chapter Six), being able to craft a 'brand me', to gain public and professional recognition was constructed as increasingly important. However, it was also constructed as a form of classed inequality, seen to require a social and intellectual confidence, and particular accent, that people from certain backgrounds didn't have. Furthermore, some dimensions of discursive capital have an *Out of reach* quality (e.g. appearing on TV, bringing an address book of the rich and titled), reminding us this is a nuanced and bounded game determined by rules which are sometimes invisible.

As noted above, the valorisation of discursive capital reflects the broader discursive frame of the *Market for recognition*. In a competitive funding environment, discursive capital is constructed as increasingly important for curatorial and Directorial staff to showcase and manage the distinctiveness of their work and manage the reputation of their museum;

> *There […] is a view that curators aren't always the best communicators of this wonderful knowledge […] whereas the moment you do get really great curators who communicate really well, you do see the benefit of it because actually you realise how inspiring they are or how well informed they are. It's the sort of David Attenborough of the curatorial world really.* (Interviewee, Funding Body)

> *Our CEO is ex-BBC two, four […] he thinks of himself as a businessman, I wouldn't say he isn't, but his skillset is, if you put him in front of a microphone and ask him to speak on message, he can at a drop of a hat.* (Focus group participant London)

Here, discursive capital is constructed as having the ability to inform, inspire and/or speak effortlessly in front of a microphone. In the first extract, it is constructed as a skill not necessarily associated with the curatorial role, but one which, if acquired, confers advantages ("*you do see the benefit of [this wonderful knowledge]*"). It implies, almost, that without communication, there is little point in doing what they do. In the second

extract discursive capital is constructed as an ability to safely represent the external image of the museum itself ("*to speak on message*"). In both extracts, they borrow from the field of TV and celebrity - metaphorically in the former and materially in the latter *("David Attenborough", "ex-BBC two, four"*[18]) – to emphasise their case. These are skills that are potentially aspirational, a form of capital both desired (though not by all) and in short supply in museums, hence valuable.

As well as gaining public recognition, discursive capital was constructed as increasingly important for enhancing professional recognition i.e. one's profile with other people in the field. Participants talked about building their professional profile by joining or setting up specialist groups, using social media or gaining platforms at particular events. The need to build profile, was not always seen as a positive step, as indicated by this speaker below who is commenting on why they left the field:

> *Looking after the history of the city or the nation […] as a public duty, and people not respecting that, and only caring about themselves. Getting to do a big speech at the MA Conference seemed to be the epitome…to matter more.*
> (Focus group participant, Leeds)

This speaker talks about how the focus on gaining professional or personal recognition, detracts from a more intrinsic purpose of working in museums, which they see as a public duty. They describe this focus on *recognition for recognitions sake* as the reason they ultimately left the field. Whilst disagreeing with it, they nonetheless illustrate the salience of gaining recognition as a route to distinction. Indeed, for some without a secure job, this maybe the only way they can get on within the field as exemplified below:

> *She continues to play a significant role in the sector by actively engaging on Twitter and participating in conferences and being a member of Museum Detox*
> (Chair, MA Conference Debate)

The speaker being described here is at the MA Conference Debate on Social Mobility and is being introduced by the Chair. She has earnt her platform by developing and deploying discursive capital (*"engaging on Twitter, participating in conferences and being a member of …"*). Achieving this platform is all the more interesting since her

[18] Sir David Attenborough is a famous TV conservationist, presenter of numerous TV programmes in the UK; BBC Two and Radio Four are public broadcasting channels in the UK (the former TV)

talk is about her own experience of not being able to find paid employment in the field. It illustrates the value of discursive capital to gain recognition in the field despite not having a paid position.

However, accumulating discursive capital was not necessarily constructed as a fair playing field. For one thing, it was seen to require a level of social and intellectual confidence that some people constructed as classed;

> *The one thing that can be missing for someone from a working-class background is confidence. In my own experience, education, skills, practice, knowledge is not enough. Those who shout the loudest in the right accent are the ones who get ahead.* (Interviewee, Librarian)

> *I was saying that I get quite nervous public speaking and haven't got a great deal of confidence. And she said, oh do you think that's a class thing? And I never mentioned anything about where I'd grown up, she didn't know anything about my background.* (Focus group participant, London)

These extracts align discursive capital with confidence. The first argues that this is even more important than other forms of cultural capital (e.g. *"experience, skills, practice, knowledge"*) enabling people to promote themselves ("*shout the loudest*") and enhance their career ("*get ahead").* This they argue is classed ("*missing from a working-class background"*); a form of class that can be heard ("*in the right accent"*). The second illustrates the reverse alignment; that lack of confidence and discursive capital can be read as a proxy of social class.

Accumulating discursive capital was also seen as a matter of having the 'right' type – accent, tone and language, as well as the position from which to speak. Many working-class participants cited examples of being made to feel they were *"un-clubbable",* not *"corporate enough",* or that their accent was *"wrong"*. People talked about their accent making them stand out, and not in a good way:

> *I studied history of art at Manchester and I stuck out like a sore thumb. My accent, my knowledge, like, I just I mispronounced things all the time and I started to think: Do I fit in here, do I have a place here. Like I did for a bit, thinking this is not for me, I should change and I felt like a real fish out of water.* (Focus group participant, Manchester)

This extract illustrates a common theme, that people felt their accent suggested not only a lack of fit with *("stuck out like a sore thumb"*), but also a lack of entitlement to be in the field (*"Do I have a place here*?"). It hints at a rather homogenous field, where everyone who does fit in, speaks in a similar way. And also constructs 'ways of saying' things as a proxy for knowledge (*"mispronounced things all the time"*). Not feeling as though one has the right type of discursive capital, likely connects to the sense of confidence described in the paragraph above. This is further amplified by not feeling one has the 'right' position from which to speak.

> *I think networking is a good one because I love it. But I didn't realise how nerve-racking some junior members of staff find it going into a room full of people you don't know. Its not a shy thing, they felt they didn't have the authority to do that.* (Focus group participant, London).

This participant associates discursive capital with a formal hierarchy. Those lower down (*"junior members of staff"*), however confident personally ("*it's not a shy thing*") may not feel they have the 'right' position (*"the authority")* from which to network. There is a circularity here as having the right discursive capital (confidence) enables people to accumulate the position from which they can then enhance a sense of confidence and right to speak.

The game was also classed in that not all opportunities to accumulate discursive capital were equal to all. Not all occupational groups, for example, were able to (or indeed would necessarily want to) attend the MA Conference, an event described for "*senior museum professionals"* (MA Website). However, this has the effect of excluding certain groups from certain conversations, including the one on Social Mobility on Museums:

> *There's a lot of working-class people that work in museums, but they work in support services, they work in kitchens, they work as security guards and so on. […]You know critical parts of our employment are as much professional as anybody else. There's very few of them in this room and there's very few of them who can be sent to conferences.* (Audience Member, MA Conference Debate)

These *"working class people",* or at least people in particular occupational groups, whilst seen to be "*as much professional as anybody else*", are nonetheless described as absent from this debate. The mantle of getting recognition is here taken up by an audience member who is in effect 'representing' their voice (although not necessarily

legitimately). It also highlights the value of the term '*museum professional'* as a form of recognition. At the other end of the hierarchy, some people were seen to be able to capitalise on a privileged form of discursive capital that not everyone had access to:

> *The thing that's in my head at the moment is Tristram Hunt and the fact that he had never worked in a museum in his life and he just gets parachuted into the V&A. Because he's a posh high profile historian that, then, was an MP.* (Focus group participant, London)

> *After all we've got (our) first Labour MP as the director of the V&A Museum. If that can happen anything can happen at that level.* (Interviewee, Funding Body**)**

The appointment of Tristram Hunt was often commented on. Here he is described as bringing with him particular forms of discursive capital intersected with cultural and political *("high profile historian" "a Labour MP"*), seen as classed (*"posh"*), and thus enabling him to bypass the game altogether (*"never worked in a museum in his life"; "parachuted in"*) to secure one of the most prestigious museum jobs in the field (*"director of the V&A Museum"*). Indeed his appointment potentially changes the rules of the game (*"if that can happen anything can happen at that level"*). It highlights that certain forms of discursive capital are potentially *out of reach* to many, but also highlights what one can do when one has them, here crossing boundaries that are impermeable to others, playing a different game and, indeed upending the rules of the game (i.e. the dedicated habitus) that many others are playing by.

Summary

In this section I have shown that the valuing of certain sorts of distinguishing and discursive capital is constructed as a form of classed inequality. Participants were explicit in voicing the 'hidden' dimension of acquiring distinguishing capital – the economic cost – and also the classed nature of having the right discursive capital – lack of confidence and being judged as having the wrong accent. There was also an implicit classing process, in that there was an *Out of reach-ness* to some forms of capital. The game is depicted as not only struggling for capital but also to name the capital valued. Here, we can see that while the museum porter attempted to promote practical knowledge over distinguishing knowledge, it was the Trustees of the V&A who were more likely to have the discursive power to change what is valued, i.e. recognition over dedication.

7.4) Knowing and showing class

In the discussions above I have shown how the discursive construction of the museum career (as a game, a habitus and valued capital) has effects for class and classed inequality. In this section I explore how class is constructed in relation to the museum career. I build on the findings in Chapters Five and Six which show how museum work is described as predominantly middle-class and discuss what this means for participants who described their background as working-class. In *Changing class* (7.4.1) I show how the discourse of career along with the discourse of social mobility, celebrate a changing of class. This renders the working-class identity less knowable and less showable. In *Changing the context* (7.4.2), I show how the research context provided an opportunity for participants to tell their career story, and which hence becomes a way of seeing class as a 'hardship narrative'. It hence offers an alternative discursive frame for knowing and showing class.

7.4.1) Changing class

The career discourse has a double classing effect as it reinforces the classed hierarchies in the field, and also constructs normative ways of being and having by which individuals are expected to 'fit'. For individuals who describe their background as middle-class, a career in museums does not necessarily challenge ideas of class. For participants who described their background as working-class however a career in museums made their 'class' more problematic. It raised questions as to whether their class had, or should, change, on what basis and what this means for knowing and showing class within the field.

The normative discourse of career, particularly for those playing the game of *Struggling in the middle,* invokes a journey. In particular, a moving away from a starting point to a particular destination. The destination 'museum work' was largely constructed as middle class (as described in Chapter Five), which then raised questions for participants from working-class backgrounds as to whether they were now in a different class:

> *I identify as working class and somebody again who is in what is perceived as a middle-class profession, and that sense of, have I changed? Have I become*

something else now that I'm in this world? And also, feeling a slight imposter syndrome, actually. (Focus group participant, London)

This extract illustrates how career presents this ambivalence. It highlights the personal struggles between a past and present world ("*have I changed*" *"have I become something else"*) and lack of entitlement or fit ("*a slight imposter syndrome*"). It also highlights the epistemological struggle between class as a subjective identity ("*I identify*") and as a categorised occupation ("*perceived as a middle-class profession*"), raising questions as to who decides what has changed and how – the classed subject or an outside observer.

The classing challenge of career was amplified by the discourse of social mobility, which valorises the class of now over that of the past. This was most evident in the MA Conference Debate, *Working Class Heroes? Social Mobility in Museums. Here speakers and audience members assumed a view of career as a journey from one class to another. This was facilitated by the* relative 'discursive power" of the academic sociologist as first speaker who framed the debate with a construction of career as a journey between origins and destination (see also 5.3.2). This construction was echoed by people within the debate.

"I would class myself as coming from a working-class background and I will fully accept that I am every part middle class now". (Audience member, MA Conference Debate).

"Don't apologise for who you are [….] most people who've come from a working-class background have felt they've had to apologise along the way or hide it. You know, the number of people I speak to who, you know, they're progressing from their class of origin through to their class now." (Speaker, MA Conference Debate)

These two extracts illustrate how the social mobility discourse valorises the class of now over the class of the past. The first speaker whilst classing their background as working class, 'accepts' a middle-class position now. The second extract whilst ostensibly arguing for valorisation of background *("don't apologise for who you are"*), then de-valorises a working-class background by positioning it as a class to move away from ("*progressing from their class of origin*"). It also interestingly hints at an

assumption that people feel they have to apologise for their working-class background (as opposed to presumably their middle class one).

The effects of the career discourse thus tend to confuse or obfuscate working-class identities. This is further reinforced by the playing of the game itself. Many participants talked about conforming to particular ways of having and ways of being (at least outwardly):

> *I think that I've quite successful integrated into the middle class, so it's certainly not apparent at interview that my background is less affluent. However, I have often felt out of place and like I don't belong in museums. I don't share the experience of most of my colleagues and that can make it difficult to relate.* (Interviewee, Museum Registrar)

This extract implies that passing as middle-class is an important part of playing the game; or at least it is to this participant. However, by doing so the participant reinforces assumptions that they have the same privileges as others and hence obscures their sense of lack and difference (e.g. "*I have often felt like I don't belong"*). Similarly, there were a great many examples of people changing their 'wrong' discursive capital to fit in with those around them:

> *I do find I adapt the way I talk to curators, senior staff, etc. – I've learnt behaviours that help me fit in, and I know I often look for cues rather than saying what I really think.* (Interviewee, Museum Officer)

> *I often have to dial back my regional accent to ensure I appear 'professional' and can compete with others who have worked in more exclusive institutions.* (Interviewee, Museum Curator)

These extracts highlight the power of playing the game. Rather than risk 'showing' their class – constructed as having a particular (i.e. wrong) form of discursive capital – participants changed accent to help them to 'fit in' and also present well to more senior others ("*curators, senior staff*" or *"others who have worked in more exclusive institutions").* This potentially makes class diversity difficult to hear, and further reinforces a view from some participants that museums are full of middle-class people.

The discourse and practice of the museum career then makes class, or at least working-class identities, less showable and hence less knowable. By playing the game, and fitting in, it may be difficult to have claims to class believed:

> *I've found I've often been asked to explain why I think I'm working class and how can I be working class. A lot of people I work with see it as a joke, or a way to wind me up. I have stopped talking about it these days, but just because I can't be bothered having the same conversations, and also of having to explain or prove myself.* (Interviewee, Museum Volunteer)

The speaker here talks about being constructed as an unreliable "knower" of their class, by their colleagues. They also go on to note that this is particularly vexing given they work at a museum dedicated to social history including class. This may not be so odd. In this context, knowing and showing class is the business of this museum and hence the speaker's colleagues may claim some expertise. It pits the expert view against the everyday view of class and puts claims of class self-identification under the spotlight. Knowing class is a discursive label that needs to be legitimated– here requiring particular evidence beyond seeing or hearing ("*having to prove myself*") - to be believed.

These competing claims to know class are shaped by context. The speaker above may have given up trying to "prove" their working-class identity to colleagues and yet is still engaged in talking about class within the research context. I turn to this next.

7.4.2) Changing the context

Whilst the discourse and practice of the museum career can obscure working-class backgrounds, the research context provided an opportunity for participants to show class in a different way. In both the focus groups and interviews, participants were invited to talk about their class, their career, and construct a career narrative. In doing so, participants constructed a version of class AS career; class was constructed as a journey between a beginning and now, a hardship overcome. It also enabled participants to demonstrate their 'dedicated' and 'enterprising' habitus in overcoming challenges and presented a rationale for why they claimed class in the way that they did.

Having the opportunity to narrate their class (either in a focus group or in an interview), gave people the reflective space and the audience, to conjure up a version of hardship that a tick-box category could not capture. People detailed sacrifice, a going without, a world which no-one would want to live.

> *I'm grandchild 13 out of 21, and I'm the first one in that family that went to university. We had nothing. … I had to wear my mum's shoes to school one day because I didn't have a pair. So, we were really, we did have nothing, completely nothing.* (Focus group participant, Bristol)

> *Growing up my parents were usually living hand to mouth […]When I reached about six my father began to fall ill and became progressively worse […] and so I half cared for him while my mother worked two part time jobs to keep us afloat as a family. (Interviewee, Front of House)*

These extracts paint a picture of economic hardship, constructing class through narrative detail. The first extract conjures up the lived experience of poverty, using a story ("*having to wear my mum's shoes*") as well as repetitive emphasis ("*really, we did have nothing, completely nothing"*) to make its case. The second extract describes a precarious existence ("*living hand to mouth")* made more precarious by their father falling ill.

Class as a 'hardship' was also constructed in relation to pursuing a museum career. Participants (often in interviews) took the opportunity to highlight both the particular difficulties they have faced, emphasising both class and also the difficulty of getting on within museums:

> *I was down to pinching shepherd's pie out of my dad's freezer at this point, and as I was cycling a round trip of nearly 28 miles a day, I was getting through a lot of shepherd's pies. I could've got to the property by bus, but that would be about a tenner a day I remember, so that was out of the question.* (Interviewee, Textile conservator)

> *I'm aware that I will never have the salary or security to buy a property or have a family. Although I am relatively comfortable with these sacrifices, it's frustrating that it's more down to my financial background than my hard work or anything else.* (Interviewee, Collections Registrar)

Both these speakers highlight sacrifices made to pursue the museum career. Class is constructed as the particular hardships they have overcome, in both cases underpinned by lack of money. The first extract emphasises this economic hardship as a physical one, having to steal food from her dad and cycle 28 miles rather than getting the bus to work. The second extract depicts this economic sacrifice as also a personal one ("*buy a property or have a family").* She locate these sacrifices, not in the fact she is being low paid ("*never have the salary or security*"), but in their classed background ("*my financial background")*. It reinforces a view of classed inequality not as a consequence of the practices of the field, but down to the relative wealth of the individual.

The hardship narrative was used not only to construct a class of 'then', but to also justify a class of 'now'. It explained the desire for a better life now:

> *I think growing up in the environment that I grew up in we didn't go to restaurants and stuff, we had like 30 quid a week for three kids and my mum. So we really struggled growing up and I think the fact that I'm able to enjoy myself now, I think that's kind of my reason for doing it…so I do live a middle-class lifestyle but I consider myself working class.* (Focus group participant, Manchester)

This speaker constructs a narrative of hardship, which is both enduring in terms of how they class themselves ("*I consider myself working class*") and also something to be escaped from ("*I'm able to enjoy myself now"*). It is because they lived through poverty, that they no longer wish to do so now. This narrative provides justification for the person who lives a middle-class life yet claims a working-class identity. Whilst they may provide a puzzle for class-categorisers, their background provides an important part of who they are.

The research context then provided these participants with the space and opportunity to make their class known. Participants used the research context to demonstrate their class through hardship – the hardship of their background and the hardship of the career journey itself. In this way then their career narrative IS their class. It connects their classed background with the classed context of museum work.

Context is an important consideration for giving certain discourses power, and others not. These narratives also provide a way to demonstrate a dedicated and enterprising

habitus and yet such narratives would not be legitimate within other contexts such as a job interview. There is also an interesting parallel with the broader museological context (as discussed in Chapter Five). The use of stories and the valuing of "lived experience" within museum practice are seen as a more inclusive and contemporary counter to object expertise and connoisseurship. In this way, a career narrative is a form of history-making, the business that many museums are in. They thus potentially provide an interesting way in which museums can construct a way of showing and hence knowing class, turning the spotlight onto the museum worker, and an important reminder that everyone has a history.

Summary

This section has considered how class and classed inequality is constructed in relation to the museum career. I have shown how the practice and discourse of career can obscure class, or at least working-class identities, making them difficult to show and hence know. I have also shown how the research context provided participants with an opportunity to demonstrate their class through their career narrative. Class was constructed not only through narrative but AS narrative connecting the classed worker with their classed context. And in considering the importance of context I highlight how the broader discursive context can make what might seem impossible, more possible by changing or upending the discourses we usually take for granted.

7.5) Conclusion

In this Chapter I have outlined how the museum career, using Bourdieu's language, is constructed as a game of distinction (Bourdieu, 1984, 1993). Career seen in this light demonstrates its classing effect, sorting players into those *Struggling in the middle*, those playing a game which is *Out of reach* and those not playing at all, the *Out, but still in.*

For those struggling in the middle, the game is bound by particular ways of being and having. An ideal habitus is constructed as both dedicated and also enterprising. Dedication reinforces the discourses which aim to *Keep Museums Special*, whilst enterprise speaks to the increasing influence of the market. Likewise, the need to have particular types of capital also echoes the tensions in the field, between *Distinguishing*

Knowledge (and hence the need to acquire specialist qualifications) and the *Market for Recognition* (and hence the need to acquire the 'right' type of discursive capital). When it comes to describing the capital required to pursue a museum career participants explicitly connected this to classed inequality, suggesting that those individuals with more economic capital and a classed confidence were at an advantage.

The rules are potentially changing. The appointment of Tristram Hunt upended the rule of the dedicated habitus in favour of a high level of discursive capital. It illustrates how those playing the *Out of reach* game have the discursive power to not only win at the game, but to potentially change the game and hence the capital that is valued. By contrast the discursive power of the museum porter, suggesting that practical knowledge is as important as having high levels of educational qualifications (i.e. *Distinguishing Knowledge*) has limited discursive power. Although context may also play a part here as the COVID 19 pandemic also upends many of our taken-for-granted assumptions about how we value work.

The chapter also discusses how the career discourse has a more general classing effect. Along with the discourse of social mobility, it de-valorises or obscures a classed beginning. Participants who described their background as working class were thus confused as to how they could class themselves, some felt they had to change their 'class' to fit in and get on. It made class less knowable and less showable. However by changing the context, the telling of career becomes a way of showing one's class, here constructed as a hardship narrative. In this way then career IS class and highlights a different way in which class can become knowable and showable as a form of personal history. This is particularly pertinent to a museum context in which stories are valued ways of knowing and showing.

Chapter Eight: Discussion & conclusion

The previous three chapters demonstrate the fundamental argument of this thesis: that analysing the discursive construction of class and classed inequality is an important research objective. The findings illustrate how class and classed inequality are contingent upon context (i.e. societal, occupational, empirical) and discursive power (i.e. the power over; through and of discourse). Using Bourdieu's conceptual framework in an innovative way - examining the field as a site of discursive struggle; upgrading his concepts (e.g. habitus to ideal habitus; combining linguistic capital and symbolic power to discursive power;) to align with a critical discursive lens - provides a substantive and valuable methodology. Hence, the analysis shows how the field of UK museum work is '*kept special'* through the discourses of *A collections meritocracy* and *Distinguishing knowledge* in which the need for, and power of, economic capital (and hence a version of class) are obscured. Further, the construction of the museum career, valorises an ideal habitus as *dedicated* and *enterprising*, in which the unequal dynamics between employer and employee (and hence another version of class) is also downplayed. It also provides a view of the construction of class and classed inequality as a struggle between 'field' discourses e.g. ideological, sociological, expert and everyday.

In this final chapter I evaluate these findings in light of the original aims and research question: *How do people who work in UK museums construct class and classed inequality in relation to their field and their career?* I first summarise the empirical contribution to knowledge and critically interpret these in light of Bourdieu's theoretical lens and current debates in the literature. These empirical contributions are fourfold. In *Keeping museums special* (8.1) I show how the construction of the museum field and career contribute to class and classed inequality, through *The disavowal of the market* (8.1.1) and hence the downplaying of economic capital, and also through *The myth of inclusivity* (8.1.2) which detracts from the necessarily exclusionary discourse of career and class as a dimension of employment power. I also show in *Struggles to know class and classed inequality* (8.2) how these are constructed through discursive and epistemological struggles between different fields. I demonstrate how this *Problematises 'class-as-occupation'* and also legitimates an argument for *Using history to know class.*

I then evaluate the *Theoretical contribution* (8.3) to knowledge which is to show the value and limitations of combining Bourdieu with a critical discursive lens (in the way that I have). I argue that the concept of field is particularly valuable to OS scholars, along with the re-working of Bourdieu's concepts of and habitus as ideal habitus; and linguistic capital and symbolic power as discursive power,. I further examine the *Methodological strengths and limitations* (8.4) of the research and consider the added value of the particular way in which this research was operationalised. The broad conceptualisation of field for example, as recommended by Emirbayer and Johnson (2008) facilitates a way of seeing distinctions that may not be immediately apparent. Lastly I consider the *Implications for research and practice* including recommendations for both.

8.1) Keeping museums special (part two)[19]

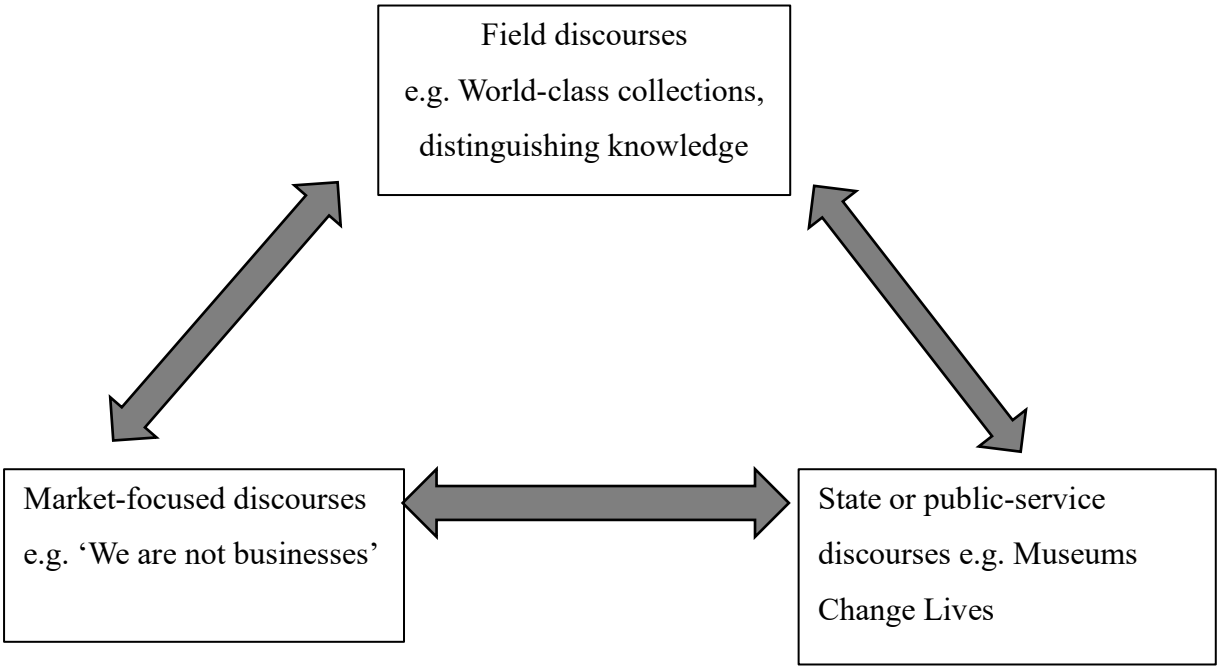
An important empirical contribution of this thesis is to show how the discursive construction of the museum field - its struggles without and within – contribute to class and classed inequality. I argue that these struggles are akin to an unwritten (and hence doxic) campaign, to *Keep museums special*, which dictates the rules of the game. This contribution illustrates the value of using Bourdieu's concept of the field as a site not just of capital accumulation but one of discursive struggle (Bourdieu, 1989, 1993). It further highlights the classing effects of the career construct, in both reinforcing the hierarchies and discourses of the field, and in necessarily perpetuating exclusion.

The struggles of the museum field are often depicted as binary. Bourdieu conceptualised cultural fields including museums as shaped by a struggle between heteronomy - in which practices are determined by another more powerful field such as the market or the government - and autonomy, in which practices are determined by the field (Bourdieu, 1993). In debates over cultural value tensions are often depicted as a struggle between intrinsic and instrumental, thus ignoring the effect of the market (Belfiore, 2002; Hadley & Gray, 2017). I argue that the struggle shaping the museum field is better delineated as a three-way struggle, between the discourses of the field, the discourses of the market and the discourses of the state (or public service). This makes

[19] Part one is Chapter Five (5.2)

better sense of the 'struggle" and also, as I argue below helps show the way these contribute to inequality. I illustrate this in the diagram below.

Diagram D: Three discourses shaping the museum field



This three-way struggle sets the discursive co-ordinates through which the museum field is constructed. The challenge is to *Keep museums special*, at the same time as sourcing the funds required to support them. Hence whilst generating income is acceptable, being too market-focussed would locate a public museum within the realm of the private art gallery or visitor attraction. Conversely, being too 'public service' risks blurring boundaries with charities and public services, who as one participant observes can arguably do it better. The struggle thus requires a delicate balance.

Using CDA was valuable in analysing both the explicit and implicit processes underpinning this three-way discursive struggle. I show here how two particular dimensions of this struggle shape the capital and habitus valued in the field and contribute to class and classed inequality. These are *Disavowing the market* and *The myth of inclusivity.*

8.1.1) Disavowing the market

A salient process in the construction of the field was that of disavowing a market or for-profit logic. This was an important part of *Keeping museums special*, distinct from a run-of the mill business logic which was strongly rebuffed by participants ontologically and ethically (e.g. "*we are not businesses"*). This positioning also serves a social and economic purpose. Arguably all those who work in the field benefit from museums staying special as this lends their work distinction. And, as Bourdieu argues and these findings show, it is by resisting the immediacy of economic profit, that museums – and some museums more than others - can ultimately and legitimately capitalise on their 'specialness' (e.g. through funding, private donations, exhibition ticket sales, recruiting volunteers).

Resisting the market however requires a 'social magic' (Bourdieu, 1989) a discursive sleight of hand, as museums and workers both require money to survive. Furthermore museums exist in a market-driven economy, and increasingly are called upon by governments to demonstrate value according to an economic logic (Belfiore, 2020). Using CDA shows that this was achieved in a number of ways. One way was by deploying the language and logic of the market to suit the needs of the field. The market discourse for example (e.g. as brand or tourism market) was deployed legitimately in a *Market for recognition* to justify a competition for profile over profit. This almost taken-for-granted fusing of discourses, an example of interdiscursivity (Fairclough, 1992; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002), indicates a longer term change. It shows how the museum field has accommodated aspects of the market and become more audience-focussed over the last forty years (Boylan, 2006; Prior & Macdonald, 2006; Wilkinson, 2014). However, as the discussion in focus groups shows, pursuing *recognition for recognitions sake* was constructed as less legitimate. Participants de-legitimised any attempt at this (e.g. the growing but suspect status of fundraisers or digital museum workers) by deploying the discourse *Distinguishing knowledge* to remind us of what it is that make museums special.

The downplaying of the market discourse was also achieved through the discourse of *A collections meritocracy.* This constructs some collections, or objects, as inherently better than others. That some are may well be the case, but the money – and discursive power - that underpins the accumulation of these collections was distanced through

history. Hence, national museums are seen as 'the best' because they have these collections, in the same way an interview candidate is seen as the best because they have high levels of qualifications, years of volunteering experience and an 'unspoilt' dedicated career path. It is a misrecognition of the potential part played by economic capital. Further, the collections meritocracy legitimates a significant bounty for the national museum e.g. government funding, a mandate to lead the sector, and a distinction and discursive power revered and reinforced by others in the field (i.e. those wish to benefit from their status either by working there or using their name as endorsement).

The disavowal of the market was reinforced by hierarchies in the field. The valorisation of museums with collections over visitor attractions for example and of specialist roles over generalist ones. For individual museum workers, there was a choice between distinction (which paid less) and greater earning power (which meant roles that afforded less status), a choice which clearly benefits those with more economic capital to begin with.

Further the construction of the museum career also diminishes questions of money, both as reward and as requirement. The normative discourse constructs an ideal habitus able and willing to *Keep museums special* by contributing increasing amounts of distinguishing knowledge, learning how to communicate, staying *dedicated* to the field, and doing so in an *enterprising* way i.e. at personal cost with little security. Indeed, the museum 'career' has become a privilege in itself, valued over and above job security, decent wages, and future prospects. For many participants this is unattainable, as was evidenced in the chaos or hardship of their career narrative.

The value of this contribution is to show how class and classed inequality are constructed in relation to the dynamics of a particular field. Museum work is not constructed via the dominant economic modes of production, through which cultural capital plays an implicit (and yet important) role (as in accountancy for example (Friedman & Laurison, 2019)). Rather it is constructed as a form of cultural capitalism in which economic capital plays an implicit (and yet important) role. It thus challenges assumptions around how organisations function and produce classed inequality. For example Acker's (2006, 2012) view that wage-setting is linked to positions in a

hierarchy, or Amis's (2019) proposal that organisations function according to a myth of efficiency are not necessarily the case in museum work. It shows the value to OS scholars of examining not just class **in** context but class **as** context, and in using Bourdieu's concept of field to do so.

Focussing on the field as a site of struggle also shifts our focus beyond the classed individual (though this is important), to the broader 'game' in which individuals and organisations are engaged. As with Ashley and Empson (2017), it shows how relations outside the field are important for shaping decisions within. They showed how elite professional service firms are positioned in a competitive relation to each other, in a cross-sector field of power. This sets the bar for a particular type of cultural capital, which whilst classed, is seen to make good business sense. This thesis shows how the position UK museums in relation to the market and government frames the way a particular type of capital (e.g. *Distinguishing knowledge*) is seen as an important way to *Keep museums special*. A field's relationship to other fields thus provides an important way of exploring how certain decisions are made and legitimated. It is potentially valuable route to elucidating Eikhof's (2017) decision-making framework as a source of exploring how inequalities are perpetuated in the workplace.

Using CDA was valuable for exploring these struggles as discursive ones, and in considering the way discourses had more power than others. Hence *A collections meritocracy* for example had power in being taken-for-granted, in being historically instituted in the field and arguably benefitted everyone (though some more than others). By contrast, the *Market for recognition* was a newer discourse which needed careful balancing with *Distinguishing knowledge*. I discuss this further in section *Theoretical contribution* (8.3).

8.1.2) The myth of inclusivity

The second discursive struggle is that between *Keeping museums special* and the discourse of inclusivity. Whilst the latter is a prominent discourse, it is the former that shapes the field as a place to work. The tensions and boundaries between these two co-ordinates, highlights a more fundamental inequality within the field - between the needs of the museum and the somewhat overlooked needs of the workforce.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the shift to inclusivity comes from questions raised by critical practitioners and also by politicians who fund museums. The new museology has challenged the supposed neutrality of museums and raised questions as to who they are for. And local authority museums in particular have long been subject to a competitive funding climate in which they have had to justify existence alongside schools, libraries and social care (Gray, 2015; Rex, 2020). The discourse of inclusivity is thus political with both a small and big P. The findings show for example that the campaign *Museums Change Lives* serves to change practice and also 'make a case' to funders.

Whilst inclusivity is a prominent and celebrated narrative in the field, it was deployed to include people outside the sector rather than address the needs of those within, or indeed of those trying to get in. Furthermore, the hierarchies in the field invert these promises, valorising the exclusive over the inclusive. Those jobs that may provide a value to the public (e.g. cleaning, front of house) were consistently placed at the bottom, education roles were positioned somewhere in the middle, whilst those that deal with an increasingly specialist and therefore exclusive area (e.g. subject curators) were at the top. This highlights different levels of discursive power; between discourses presented as a campaign and those which are more deeply embedded and institutionalised within structures and practices. It also shows the value of examining the field, using a phased and pluralistic methodology.

The career construct is pertinent to these processes. It necessarily reinforces the hierarchies of the field, constructing certain positions as more or less attractive and attainable. It also highlights the distinction between the institution and the individual. Hence whilst the museum is constructed as above a market-logic, the individual worker is not. Indeed, as has been discussed in Chapter Two, the individualised neoliberal career shifts the burden of the market from the employer to the individual (Allen et al., 2013; Lawler, 2018; Mäkinen, 2014; Tyler, 2015). Furthermore combined with the discourse of a career '*distinguished by dedication'*, it constructs an ideal habitus as able to show commitment to the field, but also deal with none in return (e.g. by being enterprising, flexible and resilient). It thus reminds us of the unequal nature of the employment relationship, an inequality that has become naturalised as such and hence is

often unremarked on (Dick & Nadin, 2011). The inequality was particularly apparent in this analysis when comparing the way that museums can benefit from a pursuit of distinction (e.g. funding, profile) in the way that individual workers cannot.

Career also acts as a classing construct in a more nuanced way. Here Bourdieu's concept of the game is useful. I described three games within which we can detect differently 'classed' positions. There are the *Struggling in the middle* those who are playing the game by the rules (of *Keeping museums special* by contributing distinguishing knowledge, discursive capital, being both dedicated and enterprising); there are the *Out of reach*, those able to play the game any way they want to and have the discursive power to change the game to suit, and there are the *Out but still in* who may resist the rules but do not have enough discursive power to change them.

Two examples illustrate these latter positions. The *Out of reach* position can be seen in the much-remarked upon appointment of Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A Museum. His appointment was seen to up-end the discourse of *dedication*, as someone who had not previously worked in a museum but nevertheless able to then achieve one of the highest status positions in the field. It shows that those appointing national museum Directors have considerable power to play by rules of their own making. By contrast, the *Out but still in* position is illustrated by the contribution of a museum porter. She represented a lone but important voice in challenging the discourse of *Distinguishing knowledge*, arguing for the value of practical knowledge – a willingness to get your hands dirty, to do the things that need doing, to know how to speak to people and not need higher education to do so. She was also happy with her job and refused to see it as a stepping-stone. Her position is not invested with the level of discursive power of a museum director or trustee. However, rather than see her viewpoint as a 'strategy' of the dominated (e.g. as per Atkinson, 2010a), I suggest that it provides powerful food for thought to re-think how we value work, particularly as we see the possibilities offered by the discourse of 'essential key workers' in current times (see also final section).

This contribution reminds us that class is not simply a measure of capital, but a measure of discursive power. The employment relationship between an institution and individual is an important aspect of this and is particularly so in a field such as museums which is less marked by project working and precarity as other cultural fields (e.g. acting

(Friedman & O'Brien, 2017) or TV (Friedman & Laurison, 2019; Randle et al., 2015)). This power dynamic is obscured or downplayed however by the overarching rules of the game – *Keep museums special*. This privileges the museum's needs over that of the individual worker and is reinforced by the discourse of the career.

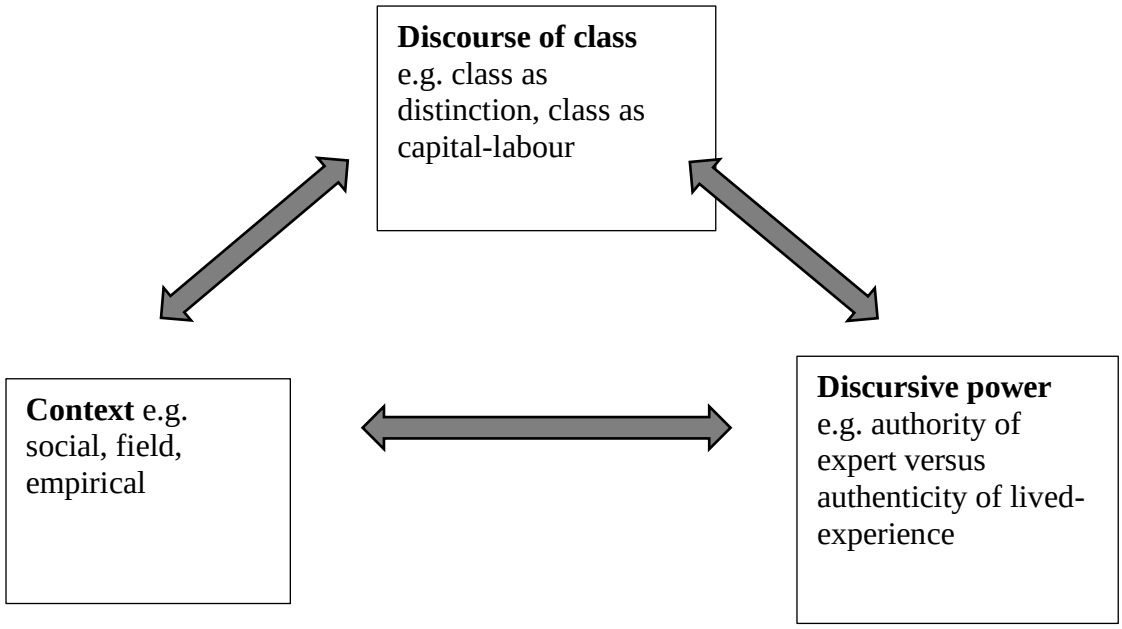
This thus provides a critical contribution to careers research showing how the career construct can be both classed and classing, as well as for example gendered and aged (Duberley & Cohen, 2010; Fineman, 2011). It moves research beyond seeing how a classed individual might negotiate a career (e.g. Blustein, 2001; Blustein et al., 2002; Liu et al., 2004) to highlight the way career excludes and also 'classes' people. It thus responds to calls to consider the dark side or disciplining effect of career (Vardi & Vardi, 2019), here showing how playing the game keeps people complicit in discourses that may contribute to their own inequality (and hence an act of symbolic violence). It also extends the critique of the social mobility discourse (e.g. Lawler, 2018; Reay, 2018) by exploring how the discursive construction of career is in itself a barrier. The analysis also shows how the discourses of the museum field have combined with the discourses of a neoliberal marketplace to construct a very particular and largely unattainable 'ideal habitus' – both dedicated and enterprising, with particular effects for individuals with less economic capital. Furthermore, it has highlighted how those with greater amounts of discursive capital and discursive power can not only win at the game but can change the game to suit.

The construction of the museum field and the museum career also has broader implications for understanding class. Traditional economic models of class based on pay such as the NS-SEC (Crompton, 2008), don't mirror the way in which hierarchies are constructed in museum work. Further it also shows that using 'career' as a way of distinguishing work based on 'prospects' is not valid in this case. Rather a career is constructed as a sign of an individual's willingness to commit to a field, rather than an employer's commitment to them. Indeed, in a neoliberal climate the whole premise of career as 'prospects' needs review. I consider the implications of this later in the Chapter.

8.2) Struggles to know class and classed inequality

This thesis makes a further empirical contribution by examining the discursive processes through which some versions of class and classed inequality are more prominent than others. It thus contributes to a growing literature that has sought to show 'classing' as a powerful everyday discourse (e.g. Atkinson, 2010b; Harrits & Pedersen, 2018; Irwin, 2015, 2018; Savage, 2007; van Eijk, 2013). It extends this by considering the processes by which discourses of class and classed inequality are (not) known and (not) seen. These are mediated by context and discursive power as illustrated below.

Diagram E: Struggles to know class



Hence, as with Irwin (2015, 2018) the thesis demonstrates that context matters. Asking participants about class within a familiar frame of reference (e.g. their field) makes class less abstract and easier to see. Class then becomes known as a homology of occupational distinction (or not) and historical privilege (or not). The broader ideological context (e.g. 21st century neoliberalism) is also pertinent as it is this that privileges an individualised version of class over a Marxist one. And the empirical context also matters. Participants can thus talk about class in the research context in ways that are not so legitimate as, for example, a job interview. Using Fairclough's (1992) model was a valuable methodology for this task. It reminds us of the importance of paying attention to context, including the genre of research itself - for example how certain speakers were presented as experts within the MA Debate on Social Mobility.

The findings also show how discursive power played a part in a 'struggle' to know class. One dimension of the struggle is between the expert and the everyday view of class. The former has a certain form of discursive power (e.g. institutional credentials, a position from which to speak on class and be heard, and the resources to do so such as a particular language, theory and methodology). The latter can draw on subjective lived experience and shared 'common' sense but does not always have the legitimate position or resources to present this as 'authoritative'. As Savage (2007) **shows,** some participants 'borrow' from the discursive power of the acknowledged expert to legitimate class claims which also then further reinforces the expert's discursive power. Others then struggle to have 'prove' their own 'subjective' knowledge.

The 'classing struggle' is also between fields. Hence, within sociology as we see in the literature review, different versions of class compete with each other; e.g. economic, cultural and discursive. Likewise different versions of class compete within political discourses, the view of class as bosses and workers compared to class as view of individually achieved mobility (Atkinson, 2010a; Cannadine, 2000). And as I show below, sociological versions compete with historical and political versions. Other fields such as museums are not defined by having a stake in such struggles, and yet I argue, potentially do have a role in shaping our knowledge of class.

Here I focus on two particular dimensions of these classing struggles; the first as problem and the second as potential solution. In *Problematising class as occupation* I discuss how the thesis provides a critical view of class understood as occupation, both in everyday and expert terms. In *Using history to knowing class* I talk about the value of the career construct and personal history as a way of knowing class and align this to the work of the museum

8.2.1) Problematising class-as-occupation

A dominant way of 'knowing' class (i.e. as used by mainstream sociology and by government officials) is as occupation (Crompton, 2008; Friedman & Laurison, 2019). The findings show that this too was prominent as an everyday proxy of class. Some jobs were seen to be working-class (e.g. '*those slaving away in kitchens'*), whilst others were

middle class (e.g. '*professor such and such'*). Furthermore, participants often conflated the class of a person with the class of their occupation e.g. people who are Museum Directors are a higher class, whilst those doing the cleaning, are working class.

The use of occupation has the weight of both common-sense and sociological theory behind it (Crompton, 2008, 2010), but it has effects and does bear critical reflection. There is a danger that in classing a person by their occupation, we simply conflate context and individual, and say little of either. If class was substituted for gender for example, it would be akin to saying women would be those people who do 'women's' jobs. Or women's jobs would be done by women. A feminist critique has been to challenge the way work is stereotyped (e.g. the think manager, think male assumption, (Schein, 1975)) challenging patriarchal notions of gender (Acker, 2006, 2012). However, whilst gender can be separated from occupation, class here is deeply entangled with it. It is important, and indeed the task of this PhD, to go beyond proxies to look at the discursive principles and power underpinning these.

Within sociology, a dominant discourse underpinning occupation-as-class as we have seen, has been the employment aggregate approach, resulting in the NS-SEC schema (Crompton, 2008). This aims to provide a theoretical account of inequality based on the employment relationship (service or transactional), ownership of capital and skill level (Crompton, 2008). It operationalises a measure of economic issues which are popularly seen as unfair and not of an individual's making (Harrits & Pedersen, 2018; van Eijk, 2013).

Within the museum context, however, the occupational hierarchy obfuscates economic inequalities. Being higher up the hierarchy signals a greater amount of distinguishing knowledge and recognition, rather than salary or managerial responsibility. Achieving this is premised on meritocratic discourses that anyone can get an education, whatever their wealth (van Eijk, 2013) or neoliberal ideas that anyone can develop a personal 'brand' whatever their family connections (Allen & Hollingworth, 2013; Conor et al., 2015; Neely, 2020). These discourses thus become a more moral evaluation of the individual (Atkinson, 2010b; van Eijk, 2013). Indeed, participants talked about people in positions lower down the occupational hierarchy being judged as unintelligent and

invisible. This shows the importance of examining the way particular occupational hierarchies are constructed.

Furthermore, the discursive framing of class-as-occupation was as a measure of individualised distinction rather than employment power. Indeed, the dynamics between employer-employee were overlooked in any discussion of class. Class-as-occupation was seen as a measure of individually achieved occupational distinction. And classed inequality a matter of personal (dis)advantage bought into the field from outside. The way in which employers benefit from the employee, indeed can exploit the museum worker looking to get on, is not described as classed.

The absence of class as an understanding of employment power is part ideological. Class as a political construct has diminished in Britain due to Thatcher's disassembling policies, the decline in trade union membership (Bennett et al., 2010; Cannadine, 2000; Tyler, 2015) and New Labour's rhetoric of '*no more bosses versus workers'* (Atkinson, 2010a, p. 184). Class as a 'them and us' dimension of employment is not a readily available or current discourse. Rather the discourse and practice of career and social mobility have 'triumphed' over that of class struggle (Brown, 2006; Lawler, 2018). Work is now constructed as a source of distinction and individual achievement, a route to getting on. Furthermore these discourses are increasingly psychologised (Dick & Nadin, 2011), contributing to a view of class as personal responsibility. As with government policy (Lawler, 2018), university career services (Allen et al., 2013) and elite employers (Allen & Hollingworth, 2013), museums too are adopting the language of 'psychology' (e.g. *Character Matters* (BOP Consulting, 2016) to support people in getting ahead.

This contribution thus shows how the discourse of 'class-as-occupation' is not neutral but is shaped differently by context. Within sociology, the NS-SEC schema is used to refer to employment power, whilst in the museum context (or at least this research context) it is primarily used to refer to distinction. And these discourses are shaped further by an ideological context which valorises a discourse of the 'enterprising individual' over capital-labour. The analysis also shows how class-as-occupation gains discursive power from its use as the basis of official measures, and also in its taken-for-granted use in the everyday.

The thesis thus contributes to literature looking at everyday classing though provides a critical way of interrogating these discourses. It supports the findings of those who find that occupation is used as an everyday classing tool and hence 'evidence' that class is a powerful everyday discourse (e.g. Atkinson, 2010a; Irwin, 2015, 2018). However, it extends these studies by showing that the way class is discursively invoked requires critical examination. Occupation is not a straightforward proxy of class and is neither universal nor neutral. Within museums, it has particular effects, rendering those lower down a hierarchy as invisible and less knowledgeable, rather than structurally and economically disadvantaged. As with van Eijk, (2013) it thus shows the value of assessing not just how class is constructed, but the way in which it is and the effects of this.

More generally then the thesis highlights the limitations and effects of using essentialist approaches to class. Using class-as-occupation for example is something of a blunt instrument and needs to be adopted with care. It says little of the differences within an occupational field, how these distinctions might matter (Friedman & Laurison, 2019), how they may be changing or indeed on what basis they might be constructed (as I show in this thesis). It is thus important to reflect on this and any other 'measure' of class, rather than assume this 'is' class - as can sometimes be the case in mainstream OS and psychological studies examining class (e.g. Belmi & Laurin, 2016; Kraus & Keltner, 2009, 2013).

8.2.2) Using history to know class

A further problem of using occupation as a proxy for class, is that it valorises the 'now', obscuring the past and saying little of the journey to get there. Many participants, particularly those from working-class backgrounds talked about feeling confused or not believed, when claiming a working-class identity, now they were working in a 'middle-class' field. This problem is amplified by epistemological struggles over how class is best known, objective measure or lived experience and who has the discursive power to 'class'.

I propose that considering history is a valuable way of knowing class. There is the history of how class has come to be known as it is today. In this way, we can 'think' along with Bourdieu, as to how class has been '*conquered, constructed and confirmed*" (Bourdieu, 1992b, p. 42). As we have seen in Chapter Two, Cannadine (2000) argues that class is simply the current language we use to model divisions in society, something that people have done for centuries. In the mid twentieth century, UK and US sociologists asserted a particular authority to speak of class (Savage, 2010). The development of computers facilitated efforts to put class on a more technical and theoretical footing (Crompton, 2008), distancing its construction from the 'gentlemanly' historical-literary approaches of earlier decades, as well as from popular ideas of status. Class 'triumphed' in the guise of tools such as the NS-SEC, and the Labour Force Survey, and measuring class in an essentialist way is still a dominant paradigm within social mobility research (Friedman & Laurison, 2019; Savage, 2010).

Class is also shaped by broader epistemological struggles, from modernism to post-modernism and beyond. Here, there is a parallel between sociology and museology as paradigmatic shifts have shaped both these fields though articulated differently. In sociology, such changes are presented as an 'individual turn' signalling rejection of class as substantive category, followed by a 'cultural' turn and a renaissance of class as an issue of context and process (Crompton, 2010). In museums, postmodernism is celebrated as the new museology, with a shift away from an object-based connoisseurship to a valuing of stories and lived-experience (as evidenced in this thesis).

These shifts have also shaped the study of career. As discussed in Chapter Two, there is a growing interest in career narratives, not as a way of accessing 'truth' but as a way of understanding the stories and discourses which construct a social and personal reality (Blustein et al., 2004; Duberley et al., 2006). The findings of this thesis show that telling a story (a history or narrative) was not only a route to accessing career; it was a route to accessing class. Participants who took part in constructing a career narrative, were also able to construct class **as** narrative. They could describe a beginning and a journey, construct a tale of hardship and give it melodramatic 'oomph'. This was 'their' knowledge which countered and potentially confused any attempt at measurement. Their history then **is** their class.

This thesis thus sheds different light on accessing knowledge of class. It proposes seeing class not just in the things that people do (or have), or as an analysis of their classed context and dispositions, but as a telling of their story in between. It is via career narratives that we can connect the classed individual to a classed context, and as I show here, see class as the 'hardship' in between. In a context, such as a neoliberal climate where personal qualities such as resilience are ostensibly valorised (Lawler, 2018), enabling people to demonstrate theirs through narrative seems reasonable. Of course, it is more legitimate in a research context than say a job interview, though not impossible. And as I discuss above, museums are well-equipped to attend to stories. They just need to attend to the stories of their workforce.

This thesis thus contributes to the methodology on everyday classing by highlighting the value of the constructed career narrative as method and epistemology. Debates in sociology have thus far focussed on the way in which class is asked about (Payne & Grew, 2005), the effects of social desirability within the research context (Savage, 2005) and the blind-spots or superiority of the researcher (Savage, 2005). The (quite legitimate) concern has been to manage the researcher's view (abstract, theoretical) in order to access the view of the researched (everyday practical sense). This contribution shows that another fruitful approach is to use the discursively constructed career narrative to connect the (classed) individual with their (classed) context. Not only does this tell us something about the discourses shaping career or the workplace, but as we have seen the discourses shaping class.

A focus on career as narrative also turns it from being a normative discourse perpetuating inequality (see 8.1.2) to a valuable methodology which can shed insights into that inequality. It shows how the work of critical career scholars using a social constructionist lens (Blustein et al., 2004; Cohen et al., 2004)), can bring value to scholars examining class and social mobility. Career narratives do not provide a 'truth' to class, but they provide access to the discursive processes by which career, field, class and classed inequality are constructed.

8.3) Evaluating the theoretical contribution

The thesis demonstrates the value of combining Bourdieu's theoretical concepts with a critical discursive lens. Whilst this is not the first study to do so (e.g. Harju & Huovinen, 2015; Harrington et al., 2015; Riach, 2007), the thesis provides clarity around how to align and make the most of Bourdieu's conceptual trilogy with a discursive analysis. Hence, I focus on field as a site of discursive struggle, develop habitus to one of ideal habitus and adapt Bourdieu's concepts e.g. of linguistic capital and symbolic power to develop a broader one of discursive power. This thus provides a clear and valuable route-map for OS (or indeed other) researchers interested in using Bourdieu's theory discursively.

The thesis shows how critical discourse analysis provides a valuable way of 'operationalising' a Bourdieusian approach. Bourdieu himself acknowledged that piecing together the 'struggles' of a field, particularly as these have happened in the past, is a substantial undertaking (Bourdieu, 1993). However, discourse analysis provides a route in to seeing such struggles, both past and present, and a richer insight than say a mapping of the capital held by each institution which is one suggestion of Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Fairclough's (1992) focus on inter-discursivity is valuable as it helps explore social change as discursive change e.g. the increasing marketisation of museums and its iteration in a *Market for recognition*. Discourse analysis also enables one to see how certain practices and structures retain hegemonic power (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002) e.g. *A collections meritocracy* which has become instituted and taken-for-granted over time distanced from material inequality by the discourse of history.

Conversely, the concept of field as a site of discursive struggle provides a valuable theoretical dimension to a critical discourse analysis (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). It provides a different way of examining discourse; not simply a product of a top-down ideology or as free-floating ideas but anchored within the struggles of a field. These struggles are between fields, within fields and between the individual and the field. Hence it is possible to see how discourses from within a field e.g. *Distinguishing knowledge* bump up against discourses from without e.g. *the market*. And thus to explore how change happens (e.g. *Market for recognition*) and how it does not (e.g. the

need for the museum worker to still be *dedicated* despite the lack of jobs). In this way then class and classed inequality can be examined as the consequence of this struggle within and without, and also of having the discursive power to shape this struggle.

The thesis also shows how a particular articulation of habitus, as an ideal habitus can be successfully deployed within a discursive approach. As discussed in Chapter Two, habitus is a problematic concept for Bourdieu as it carries a theoretical load but is theoretically under-developed (Riach, 2007; Silva, 2016). I addressed this by shifting the focus away from the individual to understanding how an ideal habitus was constructed in context, borrowing from the thinking of critical scholars within OS (Acker, 2006; Adkins, 2019; Williams, 2001). This locates the problem not with the individual, but with taken-for-granted ways of doing things. In the museum field, for example, the ideal habitus of the museum worker is dedicated and enterprising, a somewhat impossible ask for many.

Central to this approach is the concept of discursive power. As discussed in Chapter Four, I combined Bourdieu's concepts of symbolic power, misrecognition, symbolic violence, doxa, and linguistic capital, to develop the idea of discursive power. And as the findings show, this provides a clear, practical and innovative way of examining how discourses have more power than others and with what effects. I outline this in the table used in Chapter Four here highlighting further examples from the findings.

Table L: Illustrating discursive power from chapter four

Discursive power	**Bourdieu's concepts**	**Further examples from findings**
Power over discourse	Symbolic capital related to having most capital	Funders, government, national museums can shape the field of museum work (Chapter Five, Six) Experts (e.g. sociologists) who have authority to know class (Chapter Five)

Power through discourse	Misrecognition; symbolic violence, doxa	*Keeping museums special via a collections meritocracy* and *distinguishing knowledge* which privileges museums over workers and obscures class as capital-labour (Chapter Five, Six and Seven) *Occupation-as-class (Chapter Five, Six and Seven)*
Power (value) of discourse	Linguistic capital (right sort of capital)	Using 'national museums' to legitimate one's own status (Chapter Six) Having discursive capital (speaking in the right way and with confidence) (Chapter Seven) Using career as hardship narrative to construct class (Chapter Seven)

As I show in the Table, discursive power describes having power **over** discourse; power **through** discourse and the power **of** discourse. This, as I noted in Chapter Four, was developed from my own need for clarity during analysis. It hopefully provides clarity for other scholars showing how Bourdieu's concepts related to language and power can legitimately be used discursively. As Silva and Warde (2010) argue, Bourdieu was pragmatic about his own theoretical concepts arguing they were to be used in the field and hence adapted as needed.

The value of this approach is to show how a discourse has power both because of its connection to social position (i.e. power over discourse) and because it has become ostensibly detached from this (i.e. power through discourse) – this I argue is partly to do with history and partly to do with the ostensible benefits that discourse may bestow, to some if not all. Hence, as I show above, funders including government have power over discourses within the museum field because of their economic capital. They can (try to) influence museums to be inclusive or enterprising. Whilst the latter discourse is resisted, the former (being inclusive) has become deployed as a celebrated discourse (though is

also contested). This is potentially because being inclusive, or public service, has a longer history in the field (as I show in Chapter Three), and because more people (those in local authority museums) potentially have a stake in adopting this (as well as for some museum workers a genuine desire to be inclusive). However, the hierarchies within the field and the museum career uphold a more taken-for-granted and hence doxic field-level discourse, of *Keeping museums special (and some more special than others)* through *a collections meritocracy* for example. This discourse is difficult to argue with, and indeed though some participants disputed the status of national museums they did so using this discourse. It thus has substantial discursive power because if its doxic deployment and also has particular effects. It furthers the misrecognition of the economic capital (i.e. wealthy collectors and patrons) which underpin the 'best' and 'world-class' collections amassed by the national museum, enabling them to accumulate economic capital (i.e. government funding) and capitalise on their distinction to the detriment of other museums and the museum worker. Furthermore, the national museum has become a valued form of discursive capital in itself, as participants use it to legitimate their own status, hence showing the power of discourse. It thus highlights how inequality is maintained through history (practices over time make things doxic) and because discourses offer the promise of something even if at cost, here the distinction of working in the field.

Utilising and developing Bourdieu's framework in this way thus provides a valuable theoretical contribution. It demonstrates the value of using Bourdieu as a theoretical lens to discourse scholars, where the value of this lens has sometimes been overlooked or called into question (Riach, 2007; Sayer, 2017). It also demonstrates how to do so in a way that makes the most of his concepts e.g. field, capital, habitus, symbolic power, doxa, as well the thinking of discourse analysts (e.g. Fairclough, 1992; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002) in an epistemologically sound and analytically innovative way.

A limitation of this theoretical approach however is its focus on the broader picture potentially at the expense of the individual one. For example, whilst habitus as personal subjectivity is problematic for this study, it is not necessarily problematic for other perspectives (e.g. Bradley, 2018; Gardner et al., 2018). This however is a bigger challenge and beyond the scope of this thesis. Social constructionism as a paradigm struggles with addressing the felt subjectivity of individuals (Burr, 2015; Burr & Dick,

2017). The scope of this thesis at least provides a framework, a jumping off point from which future research can then address class and classed inequality from a range of different perspectives.

8.4) Methodological strengths and limitations

A further contribution of this thesis is to provide a practical toolkit from which a broad-based and in-depth critical discursive analysis can be conducted. Clearly much of this is indebted to the work of Fairclough (1992) as it is from his original and very clear model that this analysis is based. My addition (as well as incorporating Bourdieu) is to provide practical steps on how to apply this particularly when dealing with large amounts of varied data. I borrow from the principles of template analysis (King, 2012) and also the advice of Jorgensen & Phillips, (2002) to show how depth of analysis (zooming in) can be combined with breadth of analysis (zooming out).

A particular strength of the methodology is its iterative approach. I developed the substantive data collection parts (phase two and three) based on analysis of data collected from a pilot study (phase one). Rather than designing the project based only on the literature or my assumptions, I was able to design it around the findings from the field. This led me to focus on the discursive construction of hierarchies within the field and also to consider different ways of asking about career (e.g. the use of images and also interviews). The data analysis was also iterative (see Appendices O, P and R for examples of how the coding frameworks used and hence how the analysis was developed). By zooming in I was able to develop a theme or hypothesise a discourse, and by zooming out I could then explore and test this in the rest of the data. This was as much a practical approach, as I was led by deadlines for developing papers, and also constrained by the requirements of conducting doctoral research within a set amount of time (i.e. four years for full time study). Applying Fairclough's, (1992) level of analysis to the large amount of data collected, simply wasn't feasible in the time available. But by developing this approach, I also gained confidence in the findings. These have gone through several iterations, been explored across different types of data, been tested at conferences and also in the submission and publication of a journal article. The final 'test' has been in the writing up for this thesis.

The iterative approach also led to the research being (ostensibly) inclusive. Rather than setting my own boundaries around who or what was in or out, I encouraged '*people who work in UK museums'* to self-select. This inclusivity ensured I was not short of participants or interest in the project. It also provided valuable data as to how participants did decide what counted as in or out (e.g. being a student or volunteer) and what they felt was important to include (e.g. a focus group in the North). In this way participants helped delineate the edges of their 'game'.

What is also pertinent to this is who didn't opt in. Despite my best efforts and some targeted communication (e.g. via people in museums) I did not get many participants in roles which were constructed as lower in the status hierarchies - cleaners, security staff, or administrators for example. This echoes other research projects, such as the BBC Great British Class Survey (Savage, 2015), which found participation correlated with being higher up the 'hierarchy'. This could be interpreted as people not seeing this as 'their' game. It could of course be that my 'targeted communication' simply wasn't targeted enough, or that people in these roles do not have ready access to the Internet at work or the time (from their daily work) to take part.

A further benefit of the research being iterative and inclusive was the decision to look at how institutions were classed as well as occupational roles. Hierarchies between institutions (e.g. national over local) was something that people talked about in phase one. It also has empirical relevance, as organisation size is included within the NS-SEC (it has a bearing on how much capital or level of managerial responsibility an individual has) (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007; Crompton, 2008). By including them both it highlighted a particular inequality between institutions and individuals; how the needs of the former were privileged over the needs of the latter and yet this was not constructed as classed.

Indeed the power dynamic between employer and employee tends to be somewhat obscured in studies looking at classed inequality through a Bourdieusian lens. The focus has been on individuals accounts of getting in and on within a particular organisation e.g. in accountancy, architecture and TV companies (Friedman & Laurison, 2019) or an occupational field in general e.g. acting (Friedman et al., 2017; Friedman & O'Brien, 2017), advertising (McLeod et al., 2009) or TV (Randle et al., 2015). There is a risk that

this approach encourages a focus on class as a form of inherited capital bought into a field, rather than one which organisations and occupations contribute to. Here then OS scholars can provide a valuable focus. For example by analysing the ways employers may legitimise making 'classed' recruitment decisions because of the wider field of power within which they function (Ashley & Empson, 2017). Or by making the implicit power (and classed) dynamic in the employment relationship explicit (Dick & Nadin, 2011). These studies, and this thesis, show the potential value of applying a Bourdieusian approach to the more general field of work. I return to this in *Implications for Research* below.

Clearly with any research project there are limitations. I mentioned above the lack of participants from particular roles (e.g. cleaning, security). This potentially limited the different perspectives within the research though also represents a future research opportunity. The strengths I mentioned above are also something of a double edged sword. By wanting to be inclusive, I ended up with more data than I needed. This invariably meant I had to make decisions about which data not to use. And whilst being iterative was valuable, it did also mean I spent a greater amount of time looking at phase one data rather than phase three.

More substantially, my own decisions and approach have steered the research towards a particular destination (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Symon & Cassell, 2012). My epistemological choices i.e. of looking at class and classed inequality as discursive constructs, frame what I see, i.e. class and classed inequality as discursive constructs. By using Bourdieu's framework I am focussed on this and not another theory. And my own anxiety in wanting to fulfil certain roles - be a good doctoral student, be a competent 'discourse analyst' and be helpful to participants – has shaped the way I designed and conducted the analysis. This was quite complex. For future research approaching the analysis of inequality within a particular field a simpler design (e.g. a focus on online data, and focus groups) could still yield a rich dataset.

8.5) Implications for research

Aside from its acknowledged limitations, this thesis provides a critical prompt to OS scholars to examine class and classed inequality in the workplace. As discussed in

Chapter Two, interest in class at work is growing but is still limited (Amis et al., 2019; Zanoni, 2011). The thesis also provides valuable contributions on which to build. I focus here on three particular implications; the first is to encourage a critical examination of class, classed inequality and career; the second is to connect areas of research and the third is to look at potentially new research agendas.

One of the contributions of this thesis is to show how class and classed inequality are contingent and constructed through discourse. For OS scholars (and indeed other scholars) it is important to critically reflect on the ways in which they conceptualise class and classed inequality and consider the broader context. I show how using Bourdieu's concept of field is a useful tool to do this. Hence, in UK museum work whilst Marxian (i.e. capital-labour) notions of class might tell an important part of the story they do not tell the full story. As Bourdieu (1993) argues the museum field ostensibly reverses the valorisation of economic capital. This provides an important counter to assumptions that economic capital (e.g. salary) measures class (e.g. Belmi & Laurin, 2016), or that controlling economic processes such as wage-setting correlate with classed inequality (e.g. Acker, 2006). Rather, the field of UK museums is constructed akin to a form of cultural capitalism, in which distinction and increasingly recognition matters. This thus provides empirical weight to Tatli's proposition (2011) that it is important to examine what is valued in context, how and most importantly why.

Fundamental to this is the idea of discursive power. As I show above (8.3) this is articulated in this thesis as threefold; power over discourse; power through discourse and the power of discourse (i.e. as a form of discursive capital). Using this lens helps connect the many arguments about what class is e.g. shaped by economic or cultural supra-systems (Crompton, 2008; du Gay & Pryke, 2002), as a measure of capital-labour (Huws, 2014; Standing, 2014) or culturally constructed identity (Bourdieu, 1984; Tyler, 2015), or best-known through expert or lived-experience (Savage, 2010). Class and classed inequality can be all of these things depending on who has the discursive power to say. Empirically, discursive power can be connected to material power e.g. employers seeking lean production (Zanoni, 2011), professionals seeking people like them (Rivera, 2012) or their clients (Ashley & Empson, 2013) or as I have shown funding bodies seeking to demonstrate inclusivity and hence social legitimacy. And,

discursive power also serves to legitimate and naturalise these processes through the language of shine (Ingram & Allen, 2018) talent (Friedman & Laurison, 2019) or the psychological contract (Dick & Nadin, 2011). Class and classed inequality are thus contoured, as Bourdieu would argue, not just by having most valued capital, but the power to value capital too (Bourdieu, 1984, 1987). And more importantly the power to make this seem natural, neutral and fair (Bourdieu, 1987, 1989).

This is thus an important reminder that scholars have discursive power too. Indeed, using academic language or method demonstrates the power **of** discourse (or discursive capital). In the sociological literature on class there is a distinction sometimes made between expert and everyday versions of class with a subtle implication that the former is a superior way of knowing (e.g. Atkinson, 2010a; Crompton, 2008). In this thesis I show the power **of** these expert versions of class, as they are used by participants to lend authority to claims of class. This is countered however by personal accounts of class illustrating that classing is subject to discursive struggle. I also show in the findings how the report *Character Matters* report (Chapter Seven) used a psychological language to lend discursive power to its findings. As OS scholars it is thus important to reflect not just on the constructs that come to us (e.g. class) but also the constructs we perpetuate (e.g. the psychological basis on which class can be 'measured' or correlated).

In this light it is thus important to critically reflect on the construct of career (Vardi & Vardi, 2019). Career scholars in OS have, in the main, overlooked class (Hughes, 2004). When career scholars have examined class it is mostly conceptualised as a separate entity bought 'to' the career, whilst career tends to be conceptualised as a neutral object of study (e.g. Blustein et al., 2002; Liu et al., 2004). However this thesis challenges this by showing the classing effects of the career discourse itself. The career discourse reinforces hierarchies; perpetuates a myth of inclusivity and constructs normative ways of doing and being within particular contexts which favour some groups over others. And, when combined with Bourdieu's notion of the game (Bourdieu, 1989, 1993), career can also be seen as a way of 'classing' people into those who are playing one game, and those playing another. As with class, career is bound up with discursive power and it is thus important to examine how this shapes 'the rule of the game' - as Vardi and Vardi (2019) argue, to re-consider the tendency to 'bright-side' career. The ideal habitus (or ideal classed subject) provides a valuable lens to examine this (Acker,

1990; Neely, 2020; Williams, 2001), as does the approach of critical career scholars who have thus far mostly focussed on inequalities other than class (e.g. Duberley et al., 2006; Sommerlad, 2011; Tomlinson et al., 2018).

There is thus a value in bringing together literatures. At a general level, and as I show in the literature review in Chapter Two, sociologists have generated a great deal of debate over class but not focussed on the organisational processes that may have contributed to it (Atkinson, 2009). Whilst OS scholars have provided a great deal of knowledge on processes contributing to inequalities but not necessarily talked about class (Acker, 2006, 2012; Amis et al., 2019). Similarly, career scholars have provided a critical edge to careers, and yet not class (Cohen et al., 2004; e.g. Duberley et al., 2006; Duberley & Cohen, 2010; Moore, 2009) at a distance from the work of social mobility scholars, who have provided a critical edge to class (but not career, or at least not much) (e.g. Lawler, 2018; Reay, 2018). Similarly, critical diversity scholars using discourse analysis have tended to focus on diversity (e.g. Zanoni, 2011), whilst social mobility scholars have focussed on social mobility (e.g. Lawler, 2018). Yet there is value in examining how these intersect and contradict (i.e. the discourses of diversity and social mobility construct the impossible task of valuing class (including working-class) as a diverse category, whilst also encouraging a moving away from working class backgrounds). Furthermore, the literature on museums focusses on practice and overlooks the workforce. This in itself echoes the thesis findings that management is lower status than the business of curating and reinforces the idea that the museum worker is not as special as the museum. There is thus an opportunity, and indeed a need to, move beyond our own field boundaries and connect ideas from different disciplines.

There are also future areas of research to which hopefully this thesis provides a framework and/or prompt. These, I suggest, are primarily around what is not seen (or at least out of scope). For example, the practices which also contribute to class and classed inequality. These were often alluded to by participants and frequently included examples of job interviews which suggests, as do OS scholars (Acker, 2006; Rivera, 2012; Scully & Blake-Beard, 2006) that recruitment practices are an important area to examine further. Eikhof's (2017) framework for examining decisions in the workplace provides a useful framework for combining an analysis of context (e.g. this thesis, Ingram & Allen's (2018) analysis of graduate recruitment literature) with an analysis of

practice (e.g. Rivera (2012), and Ashley & Empson's (2017) research which explores how HR managers make and justify recruitment decisions).

A further dimension is also the effects of classed process on the individual. These again were hinted at in this thesis research, such as the feeling of insecurity, failure, feeling judged, but were not the prime focus of the project. These are pertinent and important dimensions to examine, and again not wholly incompatible with a discursive approach. From this we can examine how the expectations and demands embedded within an ideal habitus have effects on employee wellbeing. It moves us beyond the focus of psychological approaches which have thus far explored how class affects an individual's approach to work (Belmi & Laurin, 2016; Côté, 2011; Kish-Gephart & Tochman Campbell, 2015) to examining the way an employer's expectations are unfair or unreasonable.

The implications for research discussed here focus on adopting a critical mindset to class and career, to building on the limits of a discursive approach by adopting other perspectives and foci within OS, and to find ways to further the bridging of literature. There is also the value in replicating this approach to other contexts; to exploring how other occupational fields are discursively constructed and potentially classed. As discussed in 8.4 above this could be implemented using a simpler design, such as a focus group methodology, exploring some of the assumptions and discursive struggle within a particular field. There may also be of empirical value in trialling and evaluating some of the practical recommendations discussed below.

8.5) Implications for practice (and policy)

There are a limited number of empirically-informed publications which provide guidance on addressing class and classed inequality in the workplace. Friedman and Laurison, (2019) worked with the Bridge Foundation to produce a ten step guide for employers; and Ashley et al. (2015) produced a guide for the Social Mobility Commission on non-educational barriers to elite professions. These both advocate a measuring of class in the workplace, and a move towards greater transparency about recruitment processes, including a conversation about merit or talent. Friedman and Laurison (2019) also advocate a ban on unpaid work, whilst Ashley et al. (2015)

advocate a re-thinking of the way class is talked about within the workplace. I would certainly recommend encouraging conversations about what constitutes the 'ideal habitus' and also class but would also advocate a more fundamental conversation about how work is valued. Not everyone can be mobile, and as Crompton (2010) argues, someone has to do the work at the bottom of a hierarchy, however it is constructed. I add to these recommendations by outlining some of the challenges that this thesis presents for practice, suggest ideas for solutions and ways these could be developed. These are focussed on the museum field primarily but I also consider wider implications.

A general point is that, as with OS research, there has also been minimal attention paid to the museum workforce from sector wide bodies. The focus of professional and funding bodies (and museum studies scholars) has been to *Keep museums special* focussing on collections, audiences and funding. The interests of the museum workforce are not readily considered. Where they are, as in the *Character Matters* (BOP Consulting, 2016) report, it is through the lens of the enterprising worker discourse. Coaching is being developed on the basis of the *Character Matters* recommendations but this throws the problem of class and inequality onto the individual worker (Mäkinen, 2014). Indeed, as we have seen, the individualising career augments the problem of class by demanding more from the museum employee.

A practical counter to this is for professional and funding bodies along with trade unions to take on shared responsibility for understanding the state of museum employment. Data collection mechanisms exist; the Arts Council collects data from the field, and the Museums Yearbook collects staff figures and other data every year. Collecting data about the number of jobs, their quality (as in whether they are full-time, long-term and combining the insights of this thesis as to how work is valued) and salary would be a useful base for which to have a frank conversation about the state of museum careers.

It would be timely and helpful to have a collective 'rethinking' of both the museum career and the design of the museum job. The trend over recent years has been towards increasing professionalisation and specialisation of roles (Boylan, 2006; Wilkinson, 2014). This limits mobility between these roles, and hence movement within and

beyond the field. It is likely given the funding crisis, and now the effects of the pandemic, that there are fewer secure jobs within the field. This, as the thesis shows, makes working in museums a particularly difficult choice for those with less economic capital. Various bodies e.g. universities, professional bodies, funders, have been working to develop the 'museum professional', seemingly separately and likely within competing fields. It would seem there is an onus and an opportunity to join up this expertise and develop a programme of career and skills development that thinks across and beyond the museum field, meeting both the needs of the museum employer and beyond. This may focus on career paths that encourage working across departments (e.g. curatorial and front of house), across museums (local and national), and across fields (e.g. museum and university or charity for example). There is an Associate programme managed by the Museums Association, which could provide an anchoring focus for this.

As Friedman and Laurison (2019)'s recommend there is also need to re-think volunteering and unpaid labour as an expected route into the field. This is more complex as many museums rely on volunteers and indeed, the Museums Association estimates there are between 93,000 to 95,000 volunteers within the field. Banning volunteering entirely may not be feasible or popular. But other creative solutions to career entry could be addressed. Some evaluation of entry schemes has been conducted in the field (e.g. Davies, 2007; Davies & Shaw, 2013; Hutchison & Cartmell, 2016), and these, along with this thesis, can help scope ways in which universities and employers can work together to provide accredited routes in which are paid and which benefit all.

A further challenge has been a relative silence on class and classed inequality amongst practitioners within museums. Allied to this is understanding the problem of class and who should speak of it. This research project has contributed to addressing this silence by giving permission and space for people to talk of class (and hence illustrates the discursive power of the 'external researcher'). And other studies have raised awareness of class throughout the research process (e.g. The BBC produced a TV programme [20]and also a radio discussion featuring the work of Friedman and Laurison above and

[20] How to Break into the Elite aired BBC Two August 2019 https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000772n

also that of Louise Ashley[21]). During the research process a networking group for 'working class museum professionals' has been set up, *Museum as Muck*. This provides a creative approach to generating awareness of class within the field and is thus a valuable network to work with. However there is a danger of leaving the responsibility of talking about class to those affected, or experts from outside. There is thus a need to produce a targeted series of communications with people who potentially have most discursive power, funding bodies, national museum directors and political stakeholders. An impact programme is being developed to address this, looking at a series of consultation events.

Talking about class in itself is not necessarily enough. Indeed it is the argument of this thesis to talk about class in a particular way – to re-think what is classed and to move away from class as a universally applied measurable proxy. Since my data collection, the Arts Council has developed a programme to monitor class at least in its funded organisations, based on the standard social mobility measure (e.g. occupation of a primary care-giver at age 14) (Oman, 2019). This could be usefully applied to museums, if applied along with the distinctions identified in this thesis e.g. the classed background of those in specialist roles compared to generalist roles. However, I also recommend turning this around, to measure the 'class-friendliness' of the employing organisation as for example an employer that pays interns; pays interview expenses; and provides career development opportunities for example.

Furthermore it would be valuable, though difficult I admit, to radically change how class is talked about. Museums are well-placed to represent stories of hardship. One possible suggestion would be to use the tools of the museum, such as exhibition curation, as a possible outlet for a re-telling of class (including potentially the career images and stories I have collected, ethical consent permitting). A further liberating move may be to feature these sorts of curated narratives and stories as part of a recruitment process thus moving away from a standard CV or application form. This could be as a form of work sample or a way of demonstrating the resilience so revered by normative neoliberal discourses (Mendoza, 2017). Of course some of the above is

[21] The Class Ceiling on *Thinking Allowed* BBC Radio Four 27 April 2020 https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000281t

still going to privilege some over others and so thought needs to be given to the meritocratic nature of this. But it provides a way, as advocated by Ashley et al., (2015), to think about the language of class within particular occupations.

A further and more fundamental thought is for all of us to reflect on how work comes to be valued in the way that it does. We already have a taste of this within the pandemic as essential key workers have been given a higher status (at least for now). This illustrates the way that taken-for-granted discourses can be disrupted, and from this potentially practices changed.

8.6) Conclusion and final reflections

In this thesis I have shown the value and importance of researching class and classed inequality as discursive constructs, doing so within the field of UK museum work. I also show the effectiveness of using Bourdieu's theoretical framework to address this task. The thesis thus provides a new way of seeing, researching and addressing class and classed inequality within the workplace.

The thesis addresses several gaps in OS. Not least of these is the relative oversight of class and classed inequality within research areas where it needs to have a place; critical diversity and critical career research for example. This absence is acknowledged by scholars (e.g Acker, 2012; Amis et al., 2019; Hughes, 2004; Vardi & Vardi, 2019; Zanoni et al., 2010) and a research conversation is developing (as outlined in Chapter Two) to which this thesis contributes in the ways outlined above. The thesis also responds to calls to adopt Bourdieu's theoretical framework to explore organisational processes and occupational dynamics (e.g. Chudzikowski & Mayrhofer, 2011; Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008; Everett, 2002), particularly with reference to issues of inequality (Tatli & Özbilgin, 2012). It focusses on an under-examined areas of Bourdieu's theory; for example the field as a site of discursive struggle, habitus as a property of context rather than individual in the guise of an 'ideal habitus' and 'upgrades' his concepts of linguistic capital and symbolic power to discursive power. This thus enabled a successful integration of Bourdieu with a critical discursive approach. Lastly, the thesis focusses on an area of work largely overlooked by everyone (it seems) UK museum work. This proved to be a valuable research site, constructed in

opposition to a dominant 'market' discourse (and hence a dominant economic discourse of class), and yet still a site of classed inequality.

The thesis contributes an understanding of class and classed inequality as constructed through discursive struggle. This includes a struggle to name the 'stakes' and the capital valued within a field. In UK museums this is a struggle between three discourses – those of the market; those of the state and those of the field itself. The discourse with the most discursive power (i.e. deployed by those in positions of power such as government and national museums, and also from those that are not, such as museum workers) 'dominates' the struggle. At the time of the analysis, the discourses of *A collections meritocracy*, *Distinguishing knowledge*, a *Market for recognition* and the *Dedicated* career were 'dominant', deployed to play the game of *Keeping museums special*. Those museum workers playing this game, were thus entrapped by and complicit within it, having to pursue increasing amounts of distinguishing and discursive capital at cost, and demonstrate commitment to the field come what may.

The discursive struggle is also between fields. Hence different versions of class compete within and between the political field (class as *bosses and workers* or class as social inclusion), academic fields (e.g. sociology and history) and between 'expert' fields and everyday discourse (e.g. objective measures and subjective lived experience). These all propose a version of how society is constructed and divided and on what basis. Again questions of discursive power are pertinent as to whose version is prominent. I show for example that whilst inequalities exist between museums as employers and the individuals who work in them, these are not described as classed.

By taking a discursive approach, the thesis thus provides a platform from which to critically reflect on the constructs of class, classed inequality, career and, indeed, museum. These are all shaped by past and current 'struggles' and are invested with assumptions which are instituted and potentially obscured through practice, both academic and everyday. They hence, as Bourdieu argues, warrant an epistemological break. To reflect on how they come to us ""*conquered, constructed and confirmed*" (Bourdieu, 1992b, p.42).

The contributions of this thesis also enables new research directions for OS scholars exploring class and classed inequality. It demonstrates the value of paying attention to class not just 'within' context (e.g. Tatli & Özbilgin, 2012) but also 'as' context and of using Bourdieu's concept of field as a site of discursive struggle to do so. It highlights how class can be seen as a discourse of value by which other occupational and organisational practices stem. It thus adds an empirical jigsaw piece to Eikhof's, (2017) decision-making framework, to which other pieces can be added. It also extends Acker's (2006) framework showing that occupational fields are 'regimes of inequality' in particular ways, and not always according to economic discourses. And it provides a way of thinking about how field and career intersect, reinforcing each other as well as dominant discourses.

Lastly the thesis shows that addressing class through existing discourses of social mobility and diversity for example simply reinforce a 'playing of the game'. Rather the game needs to be substantially re-thought. The way in which work is valued and career assumed to be a pathway to addressing wrongs needs to be challenged (Vardi & Vardi, 2019). As I noted in the *Introduction,* the COVID 19 pandemic shows us that ways of thinking about work are not fixed and can be changed. The lone voice of the museum porter (in 8.3.1 above) highlighted how in times of crisis (in her example the First World War), certain 'practical' skills come to the fore and challenge the whole edifice of *Distinguishing knowledge*. Within the 'right' context then certain discourses which previously had no power can gain power. Furthermore, since writing the Introduction, the *Black Lives Matter* movement has highlighted how, with enough popular legitimacy, institutional practices can also be challenged. Universities and cultural bodies are now making sure they 'de-colonise' the knowledge they produce. These struggles are ongoing and this is by no means an endpoint, but it highlights the constructed nature of the social reality which we sometimes take for granted.

Two final notes of observation and reflection. Whilst writing this, and since collecting the data, I have been attuned to debates within the museum field, seen through social media, conferences I have attended and connections I have made. These are not part of my 'data' and hence do not count in the final analysis. But they are worthy of reporting on here. It seems that on the one hand issues of workforce equality and also class are increasingly being addressed, though from the bottom up. The twitter campaign *Fair*

Museum Jobs set up in the summer 2018 regularly calls out job adverts that don't advertise salary, don't pay at all or ask for a degree without showing why. In the COVID 19 context they have also been calling out museums (mainly nationals) that are diminishing working conditions of staff. The network *Museum as Muck* also set up in the summer of 2018, has also raised the issue of class, particularly being working class. These are both gaining 'recognition' within the field.

On the other hand, the force of the market seems ever stronger and more contested within museums. In January this year, the Tate's search for a Head of Coffee on c£40K, sparked furious debate on social media, variously articulated as visitor versus collection, business versus old-school snobbery, the forces of the neoliberal market versus *arts for arts sake* – the latter implied in artist Grayson Perry's tweet denouncing the job, *"I give up, they've won".* [22] Similarly, the appointment of Doug Gurr, former head of Amazon UK Operations, as new Director of the Natural History Museum was likewise controversial. And in August 2020 the National Trust has defended accusations of dumbing down, when it announced it was cutting curatorial and conservation posts and focussing on its outdoor spaces, in an attempt to manage the loss of £200m from the pandemic[23]. It seems that the 'market' is thus gaining discursive power within UK museums, contested but legitimised through the changing context.

A final point is to reflect on my own position within a game. I have examined a field, at a safe distance, one I do not need to 'win' in. However, I too am caught in a game. Indeed, the task of the academic is not dissimilar to that of the museum curator; to produce new knowledge, to get this knowledge 'seen' and increasingly to get it 'valued' though the metric of publications, citations, successful funding bids for example (Symon et al., 2018). Indeed Belfiore (2020) observes how culture and the academic humanities, both square pegs, are being forced through the round hole of an economic discourse. The drive to publish is thus a legitimate one for the academic who wants to get on. However, as more and more papers are published, each one fills a smaller space. Like a museum worker I could resist the game, but by doing so I sacrifice getting on, or

[22] As reported in The Guardian https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/jan/29/tate-britains-40k-head-of-coffee-role-sparks-row-over-low-curator-pay

[23] As reported in the Guardian https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/aug/22/national-trust-denies-dumbing-down-in-drive-for-new-audiences

indeed of not even getting a job. It is thus safer to contemplate and challenge inequality as a collective endeavour - to pause, to reflect and consider the rules of the game. Clearly knowing the rules of the game is an important step to do so. And this is where having distance is a benefit. I would hope then that this is how this thesis can help those in museums too, by contributing the analysis and insights of relative 'outsider' as to how their game is constructed.

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[24] I have used APA version seven and have used doi numbers where I have them

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Appendix A: Ethics approval form for phase one

Organizational Psychology Ethics Form:

Proposal to Conduct Research Involving Human Participants

Before completing this form make sure you have familiarised yourself with BPS Core of Human Research Ethics. If you are conducting internet research please read the AoIR recommendations for ethical decision making before completing this form

Section A:

Name(s) of Investigator:	Samantha Evans
Date of application:	1st February 2017
Proposed start date:	6th February 2017 (ideally!)
Contact details: Email	sam.evans@bbk.ac.uk
Status (e.g. Lecturer, PhD student, BSc/MSc student)	PhD student
Supervisor (name and email) (if applicable):	Dr Rebecca Whiting r.whiting@bbk.ac.uk
Funding source (if applicable)	BEI studentship
Project Title (15 words max)	Open to all: the meaning and experience of inequality in museum careers (phase one) This will help scope out phase two for which there will be a separate application to the Ethics Board. Note I have used a different title for the information sheet to make it more appealing to participants.
Are any committees other than this one evaluating whether your proposed research is ethical? NO If yes, include the proposal you made to them and (if available) their decision	

Section B: Supporting Documentation

Listed below are the materials you need to include with the ethics submission. Please place an X in each box when you have ensured that this material is included with your submission.
Note that if you are seeking ethical approval for a survey your only need to submit the questionnaire if you are using your own questions. If you are using existing, published questionnaires, you do not have to attach the questionnaire but you do need to explain which questionnaire(s) you are using (and provide references) in Section D.
Under the "Other" option you may specify (and attach) any other documents that you consider relevant to your application. For example you can include an ethics application form that has been submitted to a different committee. If you are debriefing the participants you need to include the relevant documents here. Note that debriefing is not compulsory unless you are actively misleading or deceiving the participants as to the purpose of the study.
For projects that will run over multiple years and may involve multiple data sources it is recommended to include a data management plan. This is also required if you are applying for ethical approval for a funding application or a funded project.

Information Sheet	YES (two versions)
Consent Form	YES (three versions)
Materials used (e.g. questionnaire, interview schedule) (where appropriate)	YES (draft interview questions)
Other (please specify):	

Section C: Checklist

Will the participants be required to experience unpleasant stimuli or unpleasant situations? (this also include unpleasant experiences that may result from deprivation or restriction, e.g. Food, water, sleep deprivation)	**NO**
Will any information about the nature, process or outcome of the experiment or study be withheld from participants? (if information is withheld, the participants will need to be debriefed after the data collection. In addition, a second informed consent to use the data should be obtained after debriefing the participants)	**NO**
Will participants be actively misled or deceived as to the purpose of the study? (if the participants are actively mislead or deceived, they need to be debriefed after the data collection. In addition, a second informed consent to use the data should be obtained after debriefing the participants)	**NO**
Will participants receive any inducement or payment to take part in the study?	**NO**
Does the research involve identifiable participants or the possibility that anonymised individuals may become identifiable?	**NO**
Will any participants be unable to provide informed consent? (e.g. minors, people who may lack capacity to do so, people in an unequal relationship forced to participate, etc)	**NO**
Might the study carry a risk of being harmful to the physical or mental well-being of the researcher in carrying out the study? (any risk above the normal risk expected in everyday life should be reported here)	**NO**
Might the study carry a risk of being harmful to the physical or mental well-being of participants? (any risk above the normal risk expected in everyday life should be reported here)	**NO**
Might the study carry a risk of being harmful to the College in any way? (e.g. reputation damage, security sensitive research such as military research or on extremist or terrorist groups, research requiring illegal/extreme/dangerous materials)	**NO**
Will the research involve any conflict of interest? (e.g. between your role at work and your role as a researcher? will you want to use data/colleagues that you have access/contact with in your job but as a researcher they would not normally be available to you)	**NO**
Is there any possibility of a participant disclosing any issues of concern? (e.g. legal, emotional, psychological, health or educational.)	**DON'T KNOW**
Is there any possibility of the researcher identifying any issues of concern?	**DON'T KNOW**
Are there any other ethical concerns that you are aware of?	**NO**

If you answered 'YES' or 'DON'T KNOW' to any of the above; provide further details here; being specific about how you will address ethical concerns in the study protocol:
(you can expand the area below to use as much space as needed)
There is a very small possibility that in talking about careers and inequality a participant may talk about events that have happened in a particular organisation that are discriminatory or are of concern. I would be clear (to both myself and to my participants) that my role in this process is as a researcher, and not an investigator of fair or foul play. My responsibility is to collect data from them and to uphold the anonymity of both them and any other person or organisation they talk about, as agreed and scoped with them beforehand (see also section on anonymity). I would not therefore expect to act on any such information or to take it any further and would make this clear.

Section D: Project description

(you can expand the areas below to use as much space as needed)

Description and rationale for proposed project (in accessible terms – what is the research question, how can people benefit, what are potential risks, and how are they mitigated?)

This research project is part of a wider doctoral project aiming to explore the meaning and experience of inequality in general, and social class in particular, within museum careers.

Research into careers and career development has tended to overemphasise the agency of individuals (Cohen, 2014) and has underplayed the role that broader social and cultural inequalities may play in career/work identity and career experiences (Acker, 2000, 2006; Holvino, 2010). By contrast, more recent research from sociologists, shows the importance of social class to understanding career identities, opportunities and experiences, at both an individual and structural level, for example the concept of the class ceiling (O'Brien et al, 2016), the use of the work of Bourdieu in analysing the importance of cultural capital (Randle, Forson and Calveley, 2015; Ashley and Empson, 2013) and the challenge to the claim that new sectors such as knowledge work (Marks and Baldry, 2009) or the cultural industries offer greater meritocracy. (O'Brien et al, 2016). Researchers are also beginning to look at how career concepts shape notions of class and social mobility (Miles, Savage and Buhlmann, 2011).

This research aims to explore how inequality and social class are given meaning and are experienced within one particular occupational sector, the museum sector. This sector represents a case of interest and importance because it contributes to "what counts as valued history" (Oakes et al, 1998, p.287), and in Bourdieu's terms, to "practices of distinction" (Webb et al., 2008, p 147), so is of interest in how culture and potentially, inequality, is reproduced. Initial scoping suggests that museum scholars have consciously reflected on their practices and role in shaping knowledge and audiences (conception to consumption) but as yet have paid little attention to the profession itself, the "major hole in the middle" (Thompson, Jones and Warhurst, 2007, p. 626).

This first stage of research is to scope out how the sector itself constructs meaning around both career development and inequality. I aim to do this in two ways: to interview people who represent organisations with a stake, interest or influence in the development and accessibility of museum careers; and also to explore published data and data online. The aim is to provide initial answers to the following research questions

- How are understandings of "career" and "career development' constructed by people working within the museum sector?

- How are social class, equality and diversity given meaning within the context of these constructions?

This data will be used to scope out phase two which will involve interviewing people about their careers and for which a separate ethics application will be submitted.

Description of participants (How will participants be selected? What are the inclusion/exclusion criteria? How many? How will they be identified and recruited?)

Participants will be representatives/employees of particular organisations within the museum sector with an interest in and knowledge of career and professional development and equality and social inclusion issues. The approach will be to interview a minimum of 10 key individuals who represent the following organisations – four separate professional association/membership bodies, two statutory funding bodies, two university museums studies departments, and two consultancies working in this area. The researcher's own knowledge of the sector will be used to guide this and shape which organisations to approach.

A publically available contact point within each organisation will be approached with an information sheet (see attached). The aim will be to carry out a 60 minute interview with an interested person face to face or via Skype, and also to seek their help in identifying useful data (reports, monitoring data, website, leaflets), other participants or potential events to attend, that may be relevant to the RQs. The interview will be recorded with their permission and their anonymity assured if this is what they wish. If they do not wish the interview to be recorded and yet their participation is still valuable, I will ask to interview them and take notes. I have drafted two consent forms to cover both options (See attached: I will send the first one out and if they prefer the interview not to be recorded will then send them the second one). I will also seek ideas from participants for scoping the next stage of the research.

Participants will also be involved in the collection of Internet data. This is covered in the section at the end.

Description of Methods (What are the procedures used for data collection? What will the participants be asked to do? Where will the study be conducted? How do you intend to analyse the data?)

The main source of data collection will be from interviews, but also from publically available data (such as reports and leaflets) and Internet data such as relevant websites and news alerts (ethical considerations for Internet data are covered in the section at the end). I will approach potential participants by email and will send them an information sheet and consent sheet with my contact details should they require any further information. I will collect Internet data by sourcing through relevant websites, signing up for news alerts, and google new alerts (using search terms for example including museum, museum career, social class/social mobility/inequality and museum/arts/culture) and also by asking participants to provide me with any information that they think may be of value.

The (attached) information sheet for participants will explain that taking part involves a 60-minute semi-structured interview, discussing a number of issues, which will be general rather than personal, and which I will give them sight of beforehand. If they agree to take part I will

arrange a time and place to suit the participant and researcher, ensuring that issues of safety and confidentiality are paramount (for both myself and for the participant). If we meet face to face, I would advise against meeting in a private house for example, and aim to meet in their office or a quiet, workspace. If we communicated via Skype, I would recommend they do not conduct the interview in a public space. Consent will be sought to record and transcribe the interview, although this is not absolutely necessary for the interview to take place should they not wish it to be recorded.

The data from the interviews will be analysed using thematic analysis to identity the key and shared meanings discussed by participants around career development and equality. Any other information collected (web-based data, leaflets, reports etc.) will be assessed for its value in answering the RQ and if it is seen as valuable data will also be thematically analysed.

I will also seek permission/interest in keeping the participants in touch with initial findings of the research and in contributing thoughts to future stages of the project and how and where this could be carried out.

What arrangements are to be made to protect participants' anonymity?

Participants will be assured anonymity for both themselves (if that is what they wish) and any organisation they talk about. I will discuss this with them at the start of the interview. I will ask them to make sure that where we hold the interview is private and safe, with no opportunity of being overheard, particularly if we conduct the interview using Skype or by phone. If a participant mentions an organization that may be useful to speak to, then I will agree with the participant that it is OK to pursue contact with this particular organization, independently, and whilst protecting their anonymity (the participants) should they wish this. When transcribing all names will be changed and final scripts and reports will be anonymous with any identifying information removed. If I do use a transcription service I will ensure I use a trusted service, which offers complete confidentiality/anonymity. Any information provided to me by a participant in the form of reports or data will not be attributed to them (unless they wish it to be) and I will ensure that names of individuals and organisations are kept anonymous. If a participant gives me data that is not readily available to the public, and this is of value to the research, I shall ensure confidentiality is protected. The consent form/s also cover this possibility.

What arrangements are to be made to ensure that the data you collect is held securely and confidentially? (both electronic and hard copies)

I will make sure that contact details for, and communication with, participants are kept on a word document on a password-protected computer, and will keep this separate from any actual data collected. I will make sure that all recordings on the digital recorder are safely transferred to a computer and deleted from the recorder as soon as possible after the interview is completed. I will keep actual recordings and transcripts on a separate password protected memory stick and a computer only accessible to me (a desk based computer, not a lap top). I will also make sure I use a regular programme of back up to protect the data.

Hard copies of the interviews will only be printed once transcribed and will therefore be anonymous. Hard copies of other data that are nor normally publically available (reports or leaflets) will be kept in a securely locked drawer in my home office which no-one else has access to.

What arrangements are to be made to obtain the free and informed consent of the participants?

I will send a consent form to the participants when asking them to consider taking part and will discuss this at the start of each interview. I will only conduct the interview if they have signed the consent form. As mentioned above, they may not wish the interview to be recorded so the consent form (attached) has been amended to accommodate this.

Participants will be reminded of their right to withdraw their data throughout the process of this first phase of research up until 31st July 2017 (i.e. at which point, the majority of data will have been analysed and used to scope phase two).

If you are conducting internet research, please explain how you have addressed the following issues:
a. Does your internet research involve human participation?
b. Does your internet research take place in a private or public internet space?
c. Is it appropriate to obtain informed consent from those whose data you are using?
d. Is it appropriate to anonymise or attribute your internet data?
(Please see the AoIR recommendations for a definition of internet research and more details on these issues)

My research will involve some Internet research. I will be looking at the Internet for sources of information on the museum profession and careers, and also social class and inequality at work; this could be via public news websites such as The Guardian newspaper and also from more local, specialist professional forums (which I haven't yet come across). As this data is likely to come from a wide range of sources, intended for a wide range of uses, I will consider the ethical implications of using it on a case by case and contextualised basis, as recommended by the AoIR guidelines and also an (in press) chapter on digital ethics (Whiting and Pritchard, 2017). Thus I will consider this data first for its value in answering the RQ, the degree to which it can be treated as primary or secondary data, how public or private it is, whether consent is required, how consent could be obtained and how the data can be safely anonymized.

A and B) Some of the data I will be looking at will involve some form of human participation, such as social media, shared forums and below the line comments on newspaper or other articles. The intention is to use data that can be justifiably considered secondary data (I will not be actively engaging in such online forums to seek out this data, so in essence this could be considered "secondary" data) and that has been posted on what would be considered public sites. However I recognise the blurred lines in choosing or "constructing" data to use from digital sources (Whiting and Pritchard, 2017), and, as also outlined in the above chapter and in the AoIR guidelines, defining public versus private is not straightforward.

I would therefore look at this on a case-by-case basis to consider how public or private the data is. Thus I would consider the particular context of the data, the security of the site itself, the author's (likely) intended audience for the data, and the nature of the data itself to consider whether the data is public or private and whether consent needs to be sought. I will also consider the vulnerability of the participant and whether there is any possible harm in using the data (in which case I would not use it) but think this is minimal risk as I am looking

for data which is signifying general rather than personal experiences and meanings. As part of the process of considering this, I will discuss each case with my supervisor and also refer to the AoIR guidelines. I will err on the side of caution so if it is not clear, consent to use the data will be sought.

C and D). If I do find data that is of value and will help in answering the RQ in a way that no other data could and is not clearly publically available, I would then aim to seek consent by asking the participants directly. I have therefore drafted a second Information sheet (B) and third consent sheet (C) to use in this instance. I would attempt to contact the participant privately and send them the information sheet and consent form and ask them for their consent.

Whilst I may need to keep track of the data in an attributable form whilst analysing it, the aim would be to ensure that the participant's anonymity within the final analysis would be assured (unless they would like it to be attributed). Data will be thematically analysed, along with data from interviews, and will be used to identify broad categories to answer the RQ. Any quote used in the final thesis or any communication of the analysis will be presented anonymously, without attribution to the site on which it was used. If there was a risk of attribution or the person being identified by using a quote, I would not use it.

Section E: Declarations

Please confirm each of the statements below by placing an 'X' in the appropriate space	
I certify that to the best of my knowledge the information given above, together with accompanying information, is complete and correct.	x
I accept the responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in the attached application.	x
I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research that may arise in conducting the project.	x
I understand that **no** research work involving human participants or data can commence until ethical approval has been given.	x

Suggested Classification of project by the applicant *(please highlight)*:

SENSITIVE

Signed by the applicant:		Date	1st February 2017

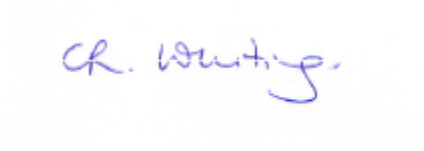
If you have answered with "Yes" or "Don't know" to any of the questions in Section C, your project should be classified as either "Sensitive" or "Extremely Sensitive". However note that your project may be "Sensitive" or "Extremely Sensitive" even if you have responded with "No" to all section C questions.

Section F: Classification

FOR USE BY SUPERVISORS OR THE DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH OFFICER

Classification of project *(please highlight)*:

SENSITIVE / EXTREMELY SENSITIVE / ROUTINE

Signed by the Supervisor (if applicable)		Date 1/2/17	
Signed by the Departmental Research Ethics Officer		Date	

Appendix B: Ethics approval form for phase two and three

Organizational Psychology Ethics Form:
Proposal to Conduct Research Involving Human Participants
Before completing this form make sure you have familiarised yourself with BPS Core of Human Research Ethics
If you are conducting internet research please read the AoIR recommendations for ethical decision making before completing this form

Section A:

Name(s) of Investigator:	Samantha Evans
Date of application:	19th January 2018
Proposed start date:	5th February 2018 (ideally!)
Contact details: Email	sam.evans@bbk.ac.uk
Status (e.g. Lecturer, PhD student, BSc/MSc student)	PhD student
Supervisor (name and email) (if applicable):	Dr Rebecca Whiting r.whiting@bbk.ac.uk
Funding source (if applicable)	BEI studentship
Project Title (15 words max)	Open to all: the meaning and experience of classed inequality in museum careers (phase two and three)

Are any committees other than this one evaluating whether your proposed research is ethical? NO
If yes, include the proposal you made to them and (if available) their decision

Section B: Supporting Documentation

Listed below are the materials you need to include with the ethics submission. Please place an X in each box when you have ensured that this material is included with your submission.
Note that if you are seeking ethical approval for a survey your only need to submit the questionnaire if you are using your own questions. If you are using existing, published questionnaires, you do not have to attach the questionnaire but you do need to explain which questionnaire(s) you are using (and provide references) in Section D.
Under the "Other" option you may specify (and attach) any other documents that you consider relevant to your application. For example you can include an ethics application form that has been submitted to a different committee. If you are debriefing the participants you need to include the relevant documents here. Note that debriefing is not compulsory unless you are actively misleading or deceiving the participants as to the purpose of the study.

For projects that will run over multiple years and may involve multiple data sources it is recommended to include a data management plan. This is also required if you are applying for ethical approval for a funding application or a funded project.

Information Sheet	YES (2A and 3A)
Consent Form	YES (2B, 2Bi, and 3B, 3Bi)
Materials used (e.g. questionnaire, interview schedule) (where appropriate)	YES (draft topic guides – 2C and 3C)
Other (please specify):	Appendix D and link to webpage

Section C: Checklist

Will the participants be required to experience unpleasant stimuli or unpleasant situations? (this also include unpleasant experiences that may result from deprivation or restriction, e.g. Food, water, sleep deprivation)	**NO**
Will any information about the nature, process or outcome of the experiment or study be withheld from participants? (if information is withheld, the participants will need to be debriefed after the data collection. In addition, a second informed consent to use the data should be obtained after debriefing the participants)	**NO**
Will participants be actively misled or deceived as to the purpose of the study? (if the participants are actively mislead or deceived, they need to be debriefed after the data collection. In addition, a second informed consent to use the data should be obtained after debriefing the participants)	**NO**
Will participants receive any inducement or payment to take part in the study?	**NO**
Does the research involve identifiable participants or the possibility that anonymised individuals may become identifiable?	**YES**
Will any participants be unable to provide informed consent? (e.g. minors, people who may lack capacity to do so, people in an unequal relationship forced to participate, etc)	**NO**
Might the study carry a risk of being harmful to the physical or mental well-being of the researcher in carrying out the study? (any risk above the normal risk expected in everyday life should be reported here)	**NO**
Might the study carry a risk of being harmful to the physical or mental well-being of participants? (any risk above the normal risk expected in everyday life should be reported here)	**NO**
Might the study carry a risk of being harmful to the College in any way? (e.g. reputation damage, security sensitive research such as military research or on extremist or terrorist groups, research requiring illegal/extreme/dangerous materials)	**NO**
Will the research involve any conflict of interest? (e.g. between your role at work and your role as a researcher? will you want to use data/colleagues that you have access/contact with in your job but as a researcher they would not normally be available to you)	**NO**
Is there any possibility of a participant disclosing any issues of concern? (e.g. legal, emotional, psychological, health or educational.)	**DON'T KNOW**
Is there any possibility of the researcher identifying any issues of concern?	**DON'T KNOW**
Are there any other ethical concerns that you are aware of?	**NO**

If you answered 'YES' or 'DON'T KNOW' to any of the above; provide further details here; being specific about how you will address ethical concerns in the study protocol:
(you can expand the area below to use as much space as needed)

Identifiable participants: I plan to use focus groups for some of this research. Clearly the discussion will be confidential and the participants guaranteed anonymity in terms of any publication or communication of the analysed data. However, they will be aware of the other participants and there is also a potential risk they will mention something about an identifiable person that isn't in the public domain (for example their experience of working with a particular Museum Director). To minimise this I will ensure that each participant also agrees to keeping other participants anonymous (as part of the consent process and as part of the focus group itself), that they refrain from discussing named individuals and/or disclosing anything that may be lead to people being identified. See the consent form 2B/topic guide 2C.

Disclosure and issues of concern: There is a very small possibility that in talking about careers and inequality a participant may talk about events that have happened in a particular organisation that are discriminatory or are of concern. I would be clear (to both myself and to my participants) that my role in this process is as a researcher, and not an investigator of fair or foul play. My responsibility is to collect data from them and to uphold the anonymity of both them and any other person or organisation they talk about, as agreed and scoped with them beforehand (see also section on anonymity). I would not therefore expect to act on any such information or to take it any further and would make this clear.

There is a small risk that taking part in a study about class, particularly in a focus group, may risk people feeling exposed as either having "privilege" and contributing to the problem, or as actually not having privilege, and feeling unable to succeed. These risks will be managed through the briefing, debriefing and careful facilitation of the focus groups, and also by giving people a choice of how they participate; in a less personalised focus group discussion or an individual discussion, with greater anonymity. Within the focus groups, the discussion will be kept to a generic level, so discussion of individual experiences will be avoided. I will brief participants to talk generally rather than personally.

In an individual interview, talking about personal experiences is clearly unavoidable. There is a risk in discussing personal career stories that elements of the past, or indeed the present or future, may bring up sensitive issues. I have past experience of this when carrying out my MSc research into women's careers (for example, in discussing careers people were also discussing their lives, and difficult situations came up). Much of this can be managed successfully by careful briefing of people so they understand the implications and benefits of taking part; also though careful facilitation and rapport-building with participants, conducting the interviews in a safe place and stopping or pausing the interview if necessary. I would signpost participants to relevant support if the participant felt this was required (Cruise for bereavement, or Samaritans), and remind them they can withdraw.

Part of the research is to ask people for ideas for what they might contribute to an imagined "*Museum of Them and Us*" (working title), a heuristic device to help them think about museum work and class using their own language. Whilst this needs to be piloted, part of the idea is to ask participants for suggestions of images, which might represent museum work, class or inequality in general. I will use the guidance and caveat recommended by Vince and Warren (2012) that suggests asking them to consider getting other people's permission if possible and also to not use photographs, which may cause a person or institution to be identifiable. The photos will be used primarily to aid discussion, (it is how they talk about them that will be analysed). They will not be published or communicated unless the participant gives permission to do so. See topic guides 2C and 3C.

At all stages people will be reminded they can withdraw their data (up to the point it is analysed). This may create problems in a focus group discussion, as whilst a participant's contribution can feasibly be edited out, it is also an integral part of a discussion, creating the conditions for others to react, so do their reactions also need to be edited? In this scenario, it would be helpful to clarify with a participant

why they want to withdraw their data to ensure these reasons are respected and used to assess unclear boundaries within the discussion. Clearly a participant has a right to withdraw without being asked or having to say why and I will acknowledge that also.

Section D: Project description

(you can expand the areas below to use as much space as needed)

Description and rationale for proposed project (in accessible terms – what is the research question, how can people benefit, what are potential risks, and how are they mitigated?)

This research is the second and third part of a three-part qualitative doctoral project exploring the meaning and experience of classed inequality within museum careers. Ethical approval was given for the first phase in February 2017; data collection and analysis were carried out over the summer 2017 and this has helped shape phase two and three. Ethical approval is now sought for phase two and three.

Description and rationale: The overall aim of the research is to explore how classed (in) equality can be understood, as a consequence of how "career" – or getting in and getting on - is constructed, and hence experienced, within the field of UK museums. Class is of interest, in part due to its absence in the diversity literature, (and many reasons have been proposed for this including the fact it is not one of the protected characteristics), and also because of its mutual implication with concepts of career. Both can be seen as a personal history - an accumulation (or not) of valued capital, and a distinguishing of ways of being, identity, or in Bourdieu's terms, habitus. Whilst a recent surfacing of class has been apparent within the OP research, much of this has tended to see class as a category and a property of the individual (Cote, 2011; Kish Gephart and Campbell, 2015; Belmi and Laurin, 2016). By contrast this PhD views class as a theoretical and relational construct of social relations, best understood within a particular field. It uses Bourdieu's concepts of capital, field and habitus to explore this within one particular occupational context, that of the UK museum sector. Like class, museums have also been overlooked within OP, and like career, are mutually implicated in the construction of class through the notion of capital (Savage, 2015; O Brien et al., 2017). It applies critical discourse analysis to explore, in Bourdieu's terms, the principles of differentiation and legitimation, and, symbolic capital of the museum field, and aims to answer the following research questions:

- *RQ1 How is career constructed within the museum field and how is capital deployed in these constructions?*
- *RQ2 How is classed inequality constructed in relationship to the above?*
- *RQ3 What is the meaning and experience of these constructions for people working in the field?*

Phase One (already ethically approved): The first phase of this research addresses the first two research questions at field (occupational) level. I interviewed people from organisations that represented the museum field, and collated publically available reports and information. Most of this data has been thematically analysed and further analysis is being carried out on aspects of the data using CDA, so is on-going. What has emerged has helped shape the research aims for phase two and three; in particular the need to explore further the way professional boundaries and hierarchies are constructed and the way career and classed inequality is constructed from these different viewpoints (phase two); as well as the career experiences of people who believe class has mattered to them (phase three). A further point

of interest is how diversity and equality is often described in the language of museums, being able to "see" difference and represent it.

Phase two and three (ethical approval sought)
For both the phases below, the idea is to use the language of the museum field to frame the research. As such the heuristic device, the "*Museum of them and us*", is used to help communicate and help shape understanding, elicit interest and broaden out response to the research in a manageable way. This is illustrated in the information documents attached (2A and 3A).

Phase Two: This addresses all three RQs and explores them at a "group" level. It aims to interview people representing particular occupational groups within the field, such as curators, conservators, educators, and front of house, and understand shared and disputed constructions of their role, identity, ideas of getting in/on and social class. Data will be collected via facilitated focus groups discussion, online forum discussion as well as through a consultation style process where ideas and thoughts can be contributed directly by email.

Phase Three: This addresses RQ3 and explores it at an "individual" level. It will collect individual narratives from people, in particular, for whom social class identity has mattered for them personally, exploring how this has mattered, their meanings of class, and career, and how they managed "difference". Data will be collected via individual interviews, including email interviews, face-to-face, Skype, and phone interviews. Again see below.

Phase	**Sample**	**Method/s**	**Data**	**Attached documents**
Phase two (RQ 1-3)	People who can represent different types of role	F2F focus group or online forum discussion Direct email contributions Individual interviews	Shared and contested thoughts on the meaning of their role, work, career and class	Information sheet 2A Consent form 2B Questions 2C
Phase three (R 3)	People who represent different class identities	Individual interviews via F2F, email, phone and Skype	Personal reflections on how class has mattered in their career	Information sheet 3A Consent form 3B Questions 3C

How can people benefit: The PhD aims to make the following contributions. Empirically it aims to provide new insights into how occupational discourses and practices may (unwittingly) contribute to "classed" inequality. For practitioners, it then provides ideas for how this might be addressed. It is also hoped that the process of participating will be of benefit to people by giving them time to reflect on their own work, potentially connect with other people in their field, and is an opportunity to (potentially) contribute to the broader development of the field. Methodologically it tests the value of using Bourdieu with discourse analysis, which may be particularly useful in understanding occupational fields, how boundaries and professional identities are constructed within the field, and the relationship between the field, the individual and the more macro level context.

Potential ethical risks: See Section C: Checklist

Description of participants (How will participants be selected? What are the inclusion/exclusion criteria? How many? How will they be identified and recruited?)

Phase Two: The sample will be people that represent different occupational roles. This will involve those primarily based around 1) curatorial, 2) conservation, 3) education & outreach, 4) marketing & digital, and 5) front of house/support roles. These represent the different boundaries identified by participants in Phase One and are based on the different specialist groups that exist within the field. I will aim to include people from different sizes and types of museum (national, local, art, science) and also who work, or have worked in different parts of the country. The aim will be to ensure diversity of views rather than representation. Within the actual focus group discussions, it will be important to manage the composition of groups to try and avoid people from the same organisation but at different levels of seniority, which may inhibit discussion. To do this I will ask people at the point of consent if they are happy to share their details with others and to let me know if they would then like to be in a different group to another participant.

These people will be recruited via a number of gatekeepers in the field. These are to a large extent people I interviewed in phase one and who have agreed in principle to help with phase two. For example representatives of professional bodies, trade unions and specialist groups who can enable access to different occupational groups. The main method is to use focus groups to help elicit discussion around the questions; and the aim would be to recruit up to 8 people, per occupational group (five groups in total so a maximum of 40 participants). However, there is an opportunity to conduct an online discussion (also see below), then there is a possibility that more people will contribute to this. A third vehicle (depending on time and resources) will be to develop a webpage for the research (using Wordpress or similar software) to explain and promote the project and encourage people to email direct thoughts and suggestions (these would be private and not seen by other participants). See appendix F

Phase Three: The sample would be people for whom social class has represented a salient aspect of their career journey or work within the museum work they do, with the aim of exploring this in more detail. The expectation will be that people who participate will come from a background, which is different to the classed nature of the museum work they do, a feature that they will define, rather than me, as the researcher. Museum work has been described as middle class within Phase One of the research, so this will be used to contextualise and prompt participation (see information sheet 3A)

These participants will also be recruited via help from gatekeepers above, but also iteratively, asking people who participate in the focus groups in phase two, using my own contacts and using a snowball approach. People will self-select. This will be a smaller sample, of 15 to 20 participants. Again the webpage will help with this.

Description of Methods (What are the procedures used for data collection? What will the participants be asked to do? Where will the study be conducted? How do you intend to analyse the data?)

Phase Two: The main method for interviewing this sample of participants will be face-to-face focus, and online discussion groups, but because of practical constraints and wanting to offer people the choice, individual face-to-face and email interviews will also be offered, and people will also be able to contribute ideas and suggestions to me directly. The rationale behind offering both face-to-face and online is primarily pragmatic, based on my ability to gain access, suiting the needs of different groups, and also with a consideration of time and

other resources. Whilst offering a mix of methods may not offer consistency, the reach and variety of approaches will offer me the diversity and richness of data I require and also suit the needs and preferences of participants. For example, (and as I have already engaged with the field for phase one) I have been offered the opportunity to host focus groups face to face at a pre-existing event; I have also been offered the chance to contribute to a discussion on a pre-existing online forum (to reach a digital heritage group).

Participants will be asked to consider a number of questions about their area of work, and to contribute to a discussion of these with other people in a similar area of work. The types of questions they will be asked are attached (2C). I am also asking them to contribute thoughts and ideas on the types of content or objects or they might recommend for a *Museum of them and us* which illustrates how meanings about museum work are constructed and how class matters. Part of this may include photographs, which they may take themselves, or which they could already have. The ethical considerations here are around ensuring anonymity, which is considered in the attached also (2C).

At a face-to-face focus group, they will be asked to attend in person, and to be willing to contribute up to 80 minutes of their time, which will include 10 minutes briefing and 10 minutes debriefing time: the actual research time will be 60 minutes. The costs of this will be minimised by hosting the focus groups at events and in places where they are already conjugated. Although this can't always be guaranteed. The benefits to them will be to help them reflect on the nature of their work, to contribute to a study that will help them develop their own area of work and address issues of equality, and also will offer them the chance to work with others in a participatory way, which may also help them with their own career. It is also hoped this will be an enjoyable experience. Between four to five focus groups will be conducted, depending on opportunity and practical considerations, and also the online discussions below (up to 6 hours and 40 minutes of data).

For an online discussion, participants will be required to contribute to an asynchronous discussion, and to give up some time to do so. Their contributions will be seen by others and will be publically available. This will be made clear to them on the information and consent form, and if they want to contribute in a private way they can email me directly. The costs to them will be minimal compared to attending the focus groups, although the benefit in terms of shared participation may be less obvious. The main benefits will be as above, to reflect on their own work and to contribute to a study that will help them develop their own area of work and address issues of equality. One to two online discussions will be conducted. It is possible that some follow up from the focus groups above may also be conducted as an online discussion.

As mentioned, for participants who want to contribute but can't attend a focus group, they can also contribute via a semi-structured individual interview (F2F), or by email contributions. These will require up to 60 minutes of people's time, although it may be that an email contribution could be much less time, depending on them. No more than an additional 5 full-length interviews will be conducted to ensure the data collected is manageable.

The data will be transcribed where necessary and analysed initially using template analysis (and based on the findings of phase one). There is a possibility that transcription will be carried out by an external service and I will ensure use of a trusted and professional transcription service and check they are bound by their own rules of confidentiality. This will also be made clear to participants. Close analysis of key aspects of data will then be analysed using critical discourse analysis.

Phase Three The main methods used will be asynchronous email interview, and synchronous face-to-face (or Skype) interview. The advantages of using email interviews for narrative

research for the participant is it allows them the time to reflect on their experiences, and to construct their own narrative at a time and pace that suits them, rather than within the constraints of a timed, synchronous interview. It may also offer them greater sense of anonymity and safety. (Gibson, 2010). From my previous research collecting women's career narratives, I found that people benefitted from a chance to pre-reflect, using a timed grid to complete. One of the disadvantages to the participant is the converse of this, in that writing and reflecting may take them more time. And for some people, having the resources to construct a written narrative may not be available, hence the importance of offering people a choice.

For participants they will be required to give up a certain amount of time and a willingness to answer and reflect on questions. The types of questions asked are attached (3C). Again, the *Museum of them and us* concept may also be used and is addressed as in Phase 2 above.

For email interviews these will be asked in two to four stages, rather then necessarily asked all in one go. It is difficult to say how much time this will take as it depends on how long they take to think about them, but as a guide it should require about two hours. For synchronous interviews these will take up to 60 minutes. The benefits to participants are the chance to reflect on their own career, which can help them think about things differently, and perhaps address future issues (although I will be clear this is not the promise, and I won't be offering career advice). From my previous research, I found that participants really valued the opportunity to reflect and think about their own career and found it of great benefit. For all cases, I will ensure people are able to give informed consent, have a safe place to carry out the interview, are aware they can withdraw and also that their data is safe (see below).

The data will be transcribed where necessary and analysed initially using template analysis (and based on the findings of phase one and two). As with above, there is a possibility that transcription will be carried out by a external service and I will ensure use of a trusted and professional transcription service and check they are bound by their own rules of confidentiality. This will also be made clear to participants. Close analysis of key aspects of data will then be analysed using critical discourse analysis and potentially narrative analysis.

What arrangements are to be made to protect participants' anonymity?

Phase Two: Participants in the focus groups will have anonymity in terms of how data is analysed and reported outside of the focus group. I will ensure all data is anonymized. Within the focus group/group interview itself, anonymity is not possible, so participants will be recruited and briefed to this effect. The consent form will reflect the fact that they agree to participate on the basis that they will know others taking part in their group and others will know them. To be able to participate on this basis, participants will be asked if they are happy to share their job title and institution with other participants. I will avoid recruiting participants from the same organisation and also be careful to manage levels of seniority so as not to constrain discussion. Within the focus group, a Chatham House style agreement will be sought from those present to respect the anonymity of those present and those discussed.

In terms of public online discussions, these will not be anonymous. Asking people to consent for their contributions to be used will be made clear at the outset. Participants will be given anonymity (by me) in terms of the way data is analysed and attributed.

Phase Three: Participants in individual interviews will be assured anonymity for both themselves (if that is what they wish) and any organisation they talk about. I will discuss this with them at the start of the interview. If they are taking part in an email interview, I will ask them to ensure that no-one else can access their email account and will ensure that no-one can access mine (see below). If we conduct the interview using Skype or by phone, then I will ask

them to make sure that where we hold the interview is private and safe, with no opportunity of being overheard.
When transcribing all names will be changed and final scripts and reports will be anonymous with any identifying information removed. If I do use a transcription service I will ensure I use a trusted service, which offers complete confidentiality/anonymity.

What arrangements are to be made to ensure that the data you collect is held securely and confidentially? (both electronic and hard copies)

The data collected will be recordings of focus groups and interviews, as well as transcripts, pages from the online discussions above (which I will cut and paste onto documents) and emailed answers/contributions
I will make sure that all recordings on the digital recorder are safely transferred to a computer and deleted from the recorder as soon as possible after the interview is completed. I will keep actual recordings and transcripts on a separate password protected memory stick and a password-protected computer only accessible to me. I will also make sure I use a regular programme of back up to protect the data.
I will make sure that I use a safe email address for interviews (this will be an institutional one) and will also cut and paste email interviews onto a word document which will then be stored on a password-protected computer accessible only to me (as above, desk top not lap top). All contact details for, and communication with, participants will be also kept on a word document on a password-protected computer, and this will keep this separate from any actual data collected.

All transcribed and word documents will be stored on a password-protected computer accessible only to me (as above, desk top not lap top). Hard copies of the interviews will be printed once transcribed, and will be anonymous. These and the rest of the data will need to be kept safe for at least five years after completion of the PhD for examination purposes and for future publications. The digital data will be kept safely using password-protected computers and memory sticks. The analysed hard copies will be stored as anonymous documents in a secure locked filing cabinet at the researchers home.

What arrangements are to be made to obtain the free and informed consent of the participants?

I will send a consent form to the participants when asking them to consider taking part and will discuss this at the start of each focus group and/or interview. I will only conduct the focus group or interview if they have signed the consent form beforehand. For online discussions and email contributions I will email or post online a copy of the information guide and consent form and ask them to read it and consent on this basis.

Participants will be reminded of their right to withdraw their data throughout the process of this. For both focus group and interview participants, this will be up to the point when the majority of data will have been analysed likely to be end September 2018.

If you are conducting internet research, please explain how you have addressed the following issues:
a. Does your internet research involve human participation?
b. Does your internet research take place in a private or public internet space?
c. Is it appropriate to obtain informed consent from those whose data you are using?
d. Is it appropriate to anonymise or attribute your internet data?

(Please see the AoIR recommendations for a definition of internet research and more details on these issues)

My research will likely involve some Internet research. Within phase two I am seeking ethical approval for exploring the use of a researcher-initiated discussion on pre-existing online forums (such as the digital heritage group which uses JISC), as well as the possibility of email discussion groups (see paragraph three for discussion of access). And within phase three I will be using the Internet (as in email and also Skype) as a tool to conduct emails. For both these, the data collected will be primary data so an active approach to gaining consent will be sought.

In terms of **Phase Two**; as recommended by the AoIR guidelines and also a chapter on digital ethics (Whiting and Pritchard, 2017), I will consider the ethical implications of conducting a discussion using an online forum, on a case-by-case and contextualised basis. Thus I will consider how (far) I need to use the forum in answering the RQ, how public or private it is, how consent could be obtained and how the data can be safely anonymized.
Whiting, R., & Pritchard, K. (2017). Digital Ethics. In C. Cassell, A. L. Cunliffe & G. Grandy (Eds.), The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods (Vol. 1, pp. 562-579). London: Sage

The online site I have in mind are useful for reaching certain types of museum worker (digital and emerging museum professionals) as they have established online networking sites. However, and with any other prospect that might arise, I will seek clarification on the best way to approach this group via a gatekeeper or forum owner first as it may be that in fact a face to face discussion is possible and more desirable. I have contact details for this, and will seek their advice and the terms and conditions of forum use. In addition, as suggested by previous studies using online forums (Giles, 2014; Hanna and Gough, 2016), it would be worth taking time to establish the practices of the forum/s to understand how new posts are created, what happens when a new person enters, and which types of post generate particular responses. As this site, whilst specialist, is essentially public, it may be possible to facilitate a more private group, which the gatekeeper can help me do. In this case I will then use the more public site to introduce the research, suggest the types of questions I want to ask and ask people to take part. Consent will be sought as part of the private discussion, and anonymity sought in the same way I would for a F2F focus group. See consent form 2B

If a private discussion is not possible then I would use the more public site to introduce the research, highlight the types of questions and gain consent to use people's contributions. I will assure them that their contributions will be used anonymously. If the research is conducted in a pubic site, I would not use the *Museum of Them and Us* concept publically but would ask people to submit ideas to the webpage privately. Whilst I may need to keep track of the data in an attributable form whilst analysing it, they and the site won't be attributed. Any quote used in the final thesis or any communication of the analysis will be presented anonymously, without attribution to the site on which it was used. If there was a risk of attribution or the person being identified by using a quote, I would not use it.

The nature of the research questions are at an abstract rather than personal level so it is unlikely that such questions will harm people, although I will make it clear to people NOT to discuss their personal career experiences online, or if they want to, to contact me separately to take part in an individual interview.

Phase three: Using email interviews. An email interview will entail gaining consent in the same way I would for a face-to-face interview. The main ethical questions are about security of the data; ensuring that the participant is able to participate with anonymity (outside of the research relationship with me) and also, as a consequence of not being able to directly see the participant, to find ways to build rapport, maintain momentum and also ensure the participant is not distressed by any particular question.

In terms of security, I would use my Birkbeck email account and would only access this at my home, on my own password-protected computer. I would also ask the participant to think about when and where they access their email, so that no-one else can access it. It may be more sensible for them to use a personal (rather than work) account, or even to consider setting up a new account.

In terms of building rapport, I would contact each participant to begin with, either by phone or by email, to explain the interview process and what to expect. The advice from Gibson (2010) is to stage interviews (asking questions in phased chunks rather than all in one go) as this helps with maintaining interest, and this can also be used a way to check in and see that people are still happy to participate. However, I would give people an overview of the interview to begin with so they know what to consider. Reminding people that they can withdraw is important, but also recognising that they may simply drop out, and you don't quite know if they have withdrawn or not, is important. So, I would agree with the participant at the outset that if they don't respond to the last three emails, then this would be counted as withdrawal and I would not use their data. Distress is hard to detect and manage if withdrawal happens and I would manage this by managing expectations, ensuring an adequate briefing and checking in on a regular basis. As with face-to -face interviews, piloting and testing the process would be carried out.

Section E: Declarations

Please confirm each of the statements below by placing an 'X' in the appropriate space	
I certify that to the best of my knowledge the information given above, together with accompanying information, is complete and correct.	x
I accept the responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in the attached application.	x
I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research that may arise in conducting the project.	x
I understand that **no** research work involving human participants or data can commence until ethical approval has been given.	x

Suggested Classification of project by the applicant *(please highlight)*:

SENSITIVE

Signed by the applicant:		Date	18th January 2018

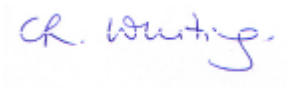
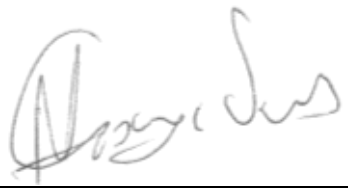
If you have answered with "Yes" or "Don't know" to any of the questions in Section C, your project should be classified as either "Sensitive" or "Extremely Sensitive". However note that your project may be "Sensitive" or "Extremely Sensitive" even if you have responded with "No" to all section C questions.

Section F: Classification

FOR USE BY SUPERVISORS OR THE DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH OFFICER

Classification of project *(please highlight)*:

SENSITIVE / EXTREMELY SENSITIVE / ROUTINE

Signed by the Supervisor (if applicable)		Date	23/01/2018
Signed by the Departmental Research Ethics Officer		Date	20/02/2018

Appendix C: Information sheet for phase one

Getting in and getting on in museum careers: A PhD research project

Samantha Evans, sam.evans@bbk.ac.uk, Supervisor, Dr Rebecca Whiting,
Department of Organizational Psychology, Birkbeck University

This is the first stage of a qualitative research exploring how careers are talked about and experienced within the museum profession. What does it take to get in and get on, has this changed, and what does this mean for people from different social backgrounds? I am particularly interested in the link between social class and career experience, as a relatively under-researched area.

Do you want to take part in this research? I would like to talk to people with an involvement in the career/professional development of the museum sector. You may be involved with a professional body, trade union, university department, funder or consultancy. At this first stage I am scoping out the issues in general so won't be discussing people's personal career experience (I will be looking at this in phase two: summer 2017).

Taking part entails a 60 minute interview with me at a time and a place that suits you; face to face or by Skype, between January and April 2017. I can travel to you if you are based in the Southeast or London. Ideally I would like your consent to record the interview. All interviews will be anonymous and no individual or organisation will be made identifiable. Before the interview I will send you a topic guide and consent form. The type of things I would like your thoughts on are:

- What are the broader issues facing the museum sector in the UK? What might this mean for people working in the sector and their career development? What does it take to get in and get on?
- What does equality or diversity mean to you or your organisation? What is and isn't working?

The data I collect will be thematically analysed, and the themes will help me identify my approach to phase two of the research (summer 2017), which involves interviewing people about their personal career experiences.

To take part or find out more email sam.evans@bbk.ac.uk

Why does this research matter? Economic inequality has been noted as a growing problem for the world economy. In the UK, in spite of legislation and widening access to higher education, the Social Mobility Commission's 2016 report, noted that social disadvantage is still limiting people's life chances. Whilst there are many complex reasons for this, the practices of the workplace are an important element in better understanding it. Indeed, research shows that many professions have become more, rather than less, exclusive, careers less secure, and employment in general more precarious. To better understand the nature of inequality, researchers need to explore how and why careers are constructed in the way they are, and the meaning and experience this has for different groups of people. This is the aim of this research.

Why museums? Whilst policymakers have suggested that some creative and cultural professions may be becoming more meritocratic, academic researchers suggest this isn't so, and acting, TV and film, for example, are still shaped by issues of class, gender and ethnicity. The museum workforce has been overlooked in the academic literature, and yet represents an important case, as shapers of history, culture and identity. Many in the sector are working hard to achieve greater equality, and recent research by the Museum Consultancy and Consortium has shined a light on the challenges and solutions to doing so. My research will compliment and build on this, focussing on how people in the sector construct personal and professional success. This is an invitation to take part in the first phase to help scope out these issues. I hope you will see the benefits of taking part.

Appendix D: Consent form phase one

Getting in and getting on in museum careers: A PhD research project
Consent form for participating in a recorded interview

Please read the following before participating in this research:

- I have read the Information Sheet (attached) and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

- I agree to be interviewed by and provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my name and the names of any individuals of organisations that I talk about will not be used without my permission. (The information will be used only for this research and publications arising from this research project.)

- I agree that any information or reports I give the researcher can also be used for the research on the understanding that my name and the names of any individuals of organisations mentioned will not be used without my permission. (The information will be used only for this research and publications arising from this research project.)

- I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time until the end of this phase of research has been concluded 31st July 2017.

- I understand I have the right decline to answer any particular questions.

- I agree to the interview being recorded. (Please see below separate consent form below if do not agree)

- I understand that I have the right to ask for the audio-tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

- I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet

Signed by:

The researcher: ……. Date: ……

The interviewee: …….. Date: ……

Appendix E: Interview guide for phase one

Proposed Interview Schedule

(Pilot interview then amend)

Introductions	Explain my interest in this. Go over the aims of this phase. It is an iterative scoping process so happy to be guided by things they want to discuss also
Briefing and consent	Go through consent form and check happy to sign. Note a second option if don't want to record interview.
Ambitions and challenges of sector	What do you see as the big challenges for the sector as a whole, now and in the near future? How do you think this might affect the shape of the sector, numbers of jobs, types of jobs, skills required? Who (museum or individual) do you think is well equipped to deal with the future and why? What do you see as a successful museum and why? What do they do that makes them successful and what helps them?
Careers of individuals	What do you think then makes a successful career in museums? Who does get in and get on and why is that? (Maybe some discussion here about different types of career path)
Challenges/social equality	What do you think might be the barriers throughout that process? What about equality and diversity issues? How might getting in and getting on present problems for people from different social backgrounds? What about social class, do you think this matters?
Challenges in achieving equality and diversity	What does equality or diversity mean for your organisation or the sector as a whole? What is "successful" equality or diversity? What are the initiatives you think that have helped? What do you think are the challenges?
Information about the workforce	Do you have any sources of information on the museum sector workforce you could direct me to? Types of jobs, who does them? How many CEOs/Directors are there and what is the demographic breakdown?
Additional	Anything else to add, any other thoughts Thanks you very much. Explain what I hope to do with phase two Ask them if they would like to stay in touch, be involved in the next part (which will involve interviewing different groups within sector about career meanings/experiences)

Appendix F: Secondary data for phase one (links)

Description
Character Matters **(BOP Consulting, 2016)** Survey and report of skills required by museum sector. https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Character_Matters_UK_Museum_Workforce_full_report.pdf
MA Conference Debate ***Working Class Heroes: social mobility in museums*** On MA Conference page a 60 minute publicly available video recording of a conference discussion on social mobility in museums. Featured four speakers and audience questions. Now on You Tube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zqVC8lqQ0I&ab_channel=MuseumsAssociation
Museums Change Lives On MA webpage for campaign which explains how museums can and do change lives https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/museums-change-lives/
Creating Better Places to Live and Work On MA webpage explaining which explains how museums can and do create better places to live and work https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/museums-change-lives/creating-better-places-to-live-and-work/
Creative Case for Diversity **(Arts council England, 2016)** A brochure explaining how ACE wants its funded organisations to tackle inequality and lack of diversity https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/diversity/creative-case-diversity
The Mendoza Review; an independent review of museums in England (Mendoza, 2017) A review of the function, funding and challenges of museums in the UK. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-mendoza-review-an-independent-review-of-museums-in-england

Appendix G: Information sheet for phase two (focus groups)

The museum of them and us

Research into museum work, difference and social class (phase two)

Samantha Evans (PhD Researcher), and Dr Rebecca Whiting (Supervisor)
Department of Organizational Psychology, Birkbeck, University of London

Increasingly, research suggests class inequalities persist in the workplace. *The Museum of them and us* is a research project exploring this in-depth within museums. This phase* looks at the differences between roles, asks what does it take to get in/on, and asks what social class means to people in the sector. Museum work has been described as middle class (Labour Force Survey); but is this the case, does this matter and if so, how?

Would you like to take part in this research?

I would like to get ideas from people from a range of different occupational roles, curatorial, conservation, education, outreach, marketing, digital, and front of house/support, employed and freelance, just starting out, trying to get in, or already established, from any part of the UK, and from any type of museum. I am interested in finding stories, ideas and views on the following:

- What makes roles different from or the same as others within the museum sector?
- What does it take to get in and on; what does getting on mean for different roles?
- Do you think there are class differences within the museum sector?
- If so, how do you know, and how do these matter?
- What do you think the sector can do about addressing possible class inequality in museum work?

I would also like to capture your thoughts and suggestions for objects, content or ideas to include in a Museum or them and us which highlights the nature of museum work, difference and social class.

Taking part entails You can take part in a **focus group:** a small group discussion around these issues. The following events have been arranged at (place and time), and future events will be arranged to minimise travel costs (thus held at your workplace or venues or at existing events where people are already conjugated). Focus groups will take up to 80 minutes including briefing and de-briefing.

The data I collect will be analysed and reported on anonymously. If you take part in a shared discussion (online or face to face) you will know other participants, although Chatham House rules will apply. See attached topic guide and consent form.

Benefits of taking part This is a relatively unique opportunity to reflect on a relatively under-explored area of museum work (indeed work in general). Taking part helps uncover and address areas of possible inequality or inaccessibility in your line of work, and suggest ideas for addressing these. It is also hoped it will be enjoyable!

Find out more If you would like to take part or find out more contact me sam.evans@bbk.ac.uk or visit the website museumofthemandus to find out more about the research and phase one

*****This is the second part of a three-part PhD research project. If you think class matters to you personally you can also (or instead) take part in phase three.

Appendix H: Joining instructions phase two (focus groups)

Dear (name)

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the focus group on social class and museum work. I really look forward to meeting you next week.

Time and place
The focus group is (e.g. **Friday, July 20th** 11.00 to 12.30, Cynon Valley Museum, Depot Road, Aberdare, CF44 8DL. I believe there is parking. Thanks so much to Charlotte Morgan for helping with the venue
https://www.facebook.com/cynonvalleymuseum/)

The purpose
I am interested in finding out two things - what it takes to get in and on, in museum work, and how social class matters. Just in case you haven't seen the website which explains the research (though I think you probably have) here is a link. There is also a link to the Part One findings if you want to see more.
https://museumofthemandus.wordpress.com/

Think of a museum object that represents your career
I would like you to think of a museum object or image you think represents your career so far. You can take your own photo if you like. I will ask 2 or 3of you to discuss this, and others can send me an image after the discussion. Please don't worry if you don't want to do this (you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to), the idea is to help make a quite abstract concept (career) easier to discuss. As an example, my career image is attached.

Consent
I attach a consent form for taking part which reminds you this is confidential. However, you will obviously be talking as a group. If you are happy for me to, I can share your details with each other afterwards but I won't do that unless you let me know that is OK. I will bring copies of these forms on the evening.

Questions or change of plans
If you can no longer take part, or want to do an interview instead, please let me know as soon as you can. If you have any questions, also feel free to ask me.

Thank you again for taking part. I look forward to meeting you next Friday.

Sam

Appendix I: Consent form for phase two

The museum of them and us

Research into museum work, difference and social class (phase two)

Samantha Evans (PhD Researcher), and Dr Rebecca Whiting (Supervisor)
Department of Organizational Psychology, Birkbeck, University of London

Please read the following before participating in this research:

1. I have read the Information Sheet and the Briefing/Topic Guide (attached), my questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

2. I agree to take part, and provide data on the understanding that my name and the names of any individuals of organisations I talk about, will be anonymised in the analysis, publication and dissemination of this research. The data will only be seen by the researcher and potentially by a professional transcription service, bound by a strict code of confidentiality.

3. In terms of taking part *(NB – I do not propose to include all of the following but will adapt/delete the form as required)*

- In the case of face-to-face or private online discussion I commit to keeping the names and contributions of people within the groups anonymous outside of the discussion.
- In the case of public online discussions, I will ensure that any post or contribution I make abides by the terms and conditions of the forum and does not harm any institution or individual. I understand that in this case my contributions will be seen by others and are therefore not anonymous.

4. If submitting actual photos to the researcher then I will adhere to the guidance outlined below (2Bi), and agree my image can be used for the purpose of this research

5. I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time until this phase of research has been concluded 1st October 2018. I understand I have the right to decline to answer any particular questions.

6. I agree to the focus group/interview being recorded (**delete as appropriate).** I understand that I have the right to ask for the audio-tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out above and in the Information Sheet

Signed by:

The researcher: ……. Date: ……

The interviewee: …….. Date: ……

2Bi) Additional advice and consent for photos

Taking or using photos to contribute: *The museum of them and us*

If you plan to take and submit your own photos to the Museum of them and us, please follow these simple guidelines.

Taking photos

1. Asking any person/s who are the subjects of your photographs for permission to use the image is considered best practice, so use the form below if you can. But in public places, where people are carrying out business in public, for large crowds, or when attending public events, this is not essential.

2. You may need to avoid photographing anything that invades another person's privacy or contravenes your organisation's confidentiality policy (for example the visible contents of documents or computer screens).

3. As taker of the image, you will retain the copyright. I will ask you for your permission to use each picture beyond the purposes of research, so you will be in full control at every stage.

Using existing images

4. If you are suggesting existing images taken by someone else, then images can be used copyright free for non-commercial research purposes, such as this one.

5. For any communication of the image, beyond the research, which does not fall into the purposes of non-commercial research or teaching, then I will seek permission.

Please send any images to me prior to sharing them with others at the focus group.

For the taker of an image (for release of the image)

- I agree for the photograph of me to be used for the purposes of research into museum careers and understand it will only be used for non-commercial research and teaching purposes. YES/NO

- I agree to the photograph of me to be used for the communication of this research to interested academics and stakeholders, for non-commercial gain YES/NO

Signed……
Date…….

The above guidance is based on the Crown Copyright Act (2015) and exceptions to this (2014), the Data Protection Act (1998) interpreted by JISC (2017), and the ethical guidance of the International Visual Sociology Association (accessed 2018)

Appendix J: Focus group topic guide phase two

Focus Group Topic Guide (how class, field and career are constructed)

Topic	Questions/detail	Timing
Briefing and introductions	Outline purpose of focus group • Two things, firstly to explore what career means to those working in museums or who have worked, and to explore how class shapes that • There is no right or wrong, all of your ideas and experiences are valid Go over consent form and give them a copy • I will need to record this. We agree to keep names of participants confidential. And names of individuals or orgs, stay within this room. Only I see it. • If you do want to tweet o talk about what happens you can do, but please don't name anyone • Get everyone to sign Check recording	6 – 6.10
Topic One: class	Introductions • What interested people about attending and what expecting? Meanings • You've attended a FG on class, but I wonder what do you think social class is? • If I said upper class, middle class, working class • Would you find it easy to know your own social class? On what basis would you know it?	6.10 to 6.20
Topic Two: Museum careers – getting in/on **Your careers**	Move on to museums/ introductions • Who here currently works in or with museums (find out role)? Who doesn't yet but wants to? Who did in the past? Good/bad (depending on time) • What do people like about working in museums • What makes it an attractive sector, for people? • What do people not like? The challenges or difficulties of working in the sector Why museums • How did working in or with museums come about? • How did you find out about it as a possible job? • How do you learn what you need to do to pursue a career? Your experiences • Did anyone find an image to represent their career • Three images. Why did you choose that image? • Can I chose one, or ask people to think of five words to describe their career What is required – given your experiences • If you were advising someone on what they needed to get in – would you say there is a particular career path? • Is there a par route in or upwards • Has this changed? Does it depend?	6.20 to 6.40

Topic Three: Distinction within sector	Distinction Explain in phase one, museum work is varied, diff roles, had become more specialist and roles more distinct and professionalised Version One I'm interested in the differences between these roles. How have museums constructed boundaries • Arrange the jobs into a dimension – who would you say has more status or power? • Why is that role more prestigious? • What do you need to do these roles? • How easy is it to move across from here to here and why not? • Do the same with museum collections	6.40 to 6.55
Topic Four Classism/ The problem of class	Bear this in mind. Going back to class, how do you think class might be an issue • What do you think might cause or perpetuate class inequality • Are there ways in which you think this might contribute to class inequality • Do you think there are certain roles that people from certain backgrounds can access more easily? Why? • If someone from an upper class background or working class what do you think might be difference • Do you think some of what is required for these roles is necessarily creating inequality? Given what we talked about in terms of getting in and on, how do you think class shapes a career in museums? • Does this matter? If you have upper class directors and working class cleaners Prejudice • Have you ever heard of the term classism • Do you think the museum sector is classist? • What problems do you think someone from the wrong class background would experience. • Has anyone ever come across class prejudice, experienced classism?	6.55 to 7.15
Topic Five What can be done	Recap what do you think museums, employers and professional bodies can do about class barriers to class What do you think the sector can do to challenge class inequality within museums careers?	7.15 to 7.25
De briefing	Thanks, next steps Feedback or further thoughts Questions difficult Tweeting etc Can people give me photos	7.25 to 7.30

Appendix K: Information sheet for interviews phase three

The museum of them and us

Research into museum work, difference and social class (phase three)

Samantha Evans (PhD Researcher), and Dr Rebecca Whiting (Supervisor)
Department of Organizational Psychology, Birkbeck, University of London

Increasingly, research suggests class inequalities persist within the workplace. *The Museum of them and us* is a research project exploring this in-depth within museums. This phase * seeks ideas from you if you think social class has mattered for you and your career. Museum work has been described as middle class (Labour Force Survey). Do you think that is the case, and if so how and how does this matter?

Would you like to take part in this research? I would like to talk to people about their work in museums, with an interest in the above questions. I am particularly interested in finding stories, views on this and any thoughts on the following questions:

- Do you think there are social class differences within the museum sector?
- Has social class been a dis/advantage for you in your museum work?
- Do you think your social class is different from others at work/ in different roles?
- What do you think the sector can do about addressing possible class inequality in museum work?

I would also like to capture your thoughts and suggestions for objects, content or ideas to include in a Museum or them and us, which highlights the nature of your work and also social class.

Taking part entails: If you are interested you can take part in the following ways

- Email interview: You can also take part in an email interview with me. I will send you a series of questions for you to reflect upon and answer by email. This will be confidential and your anonymity will be assured (meaning no-one can identify you or your comments in any communication or publication of the research). It can take as little or as much time as you wish to spend (although it is likely up to 90 minutes). Simply get in touch and I will send you some questions to contemplate
- Individual interview: Alternatively I can arrange an interview with you face to face (depending on your location), or by Skype. This will take up to 60 minutes including briefing and de-briefing, and costs of taking part will be minimised by me travelling to you or by using Skype.

Only myself as researcher (and potentially a professional transcription company bound by strict code of confidentiality) will see the data. Taking part involves reflecting on your career. If you think this may be difficult or sensitive for any reason then you let me know and we can focus on questions relating to the general nature of museum work (or you may prefer to take part in phase two see below).

Benefits of taking part This is a relatively unique opportunity to reflect on your own work and career and you may find this helpful to do this. It is also an opportunity to provide a voice on a subject that has been relatively overlooked in recent years, and help uncover and address areas of possible inequality or inaccessibility in your line of work, and suggest ideas for addressing these.

Find out more Find out more from sam.evans@bbk.ac.uk or visit the website museumofthemandus to find out more about the research and phase one

*This is phase three of a three-part PhD research project. You may also be able to take part in phase two which looks at museum work more generally, for more information on this, email me or visit the website above.

Appendix L: Occupations of interview participants

Organised according to the constructed hierarchies of the field, with role in their own words, and type of museum or employment contract in researchers words

Director	Director, support organisation Director, independent Museum director, local authority
Curatorial	Head curator, university museum Curator, national Curator, regional Curator and development officer, regional Collections standards and care manager, independent Collections and audience engagement officer, local authority Exhibitions curator, private Collections care consultant, freelance Museum officer, independent Museum development officer, support organisation Museums adviser, support organization Curatorial assistant, regional Exhibitions assistant, local
Interpretation	Interpretation, national Heritage interpretation officer, independent Collections and interpretation specialist, freelance
Registrar	Assistant registrar, national Collections registrar, regional
Librarian	Reference librarian, national
Education	Museum educator, regional Learning co-ordinator, Independent. Temporary, project by project basis Learning manager, independent Ex-education
Conservation	Costume conservator, unemployed Textile and fashion conservator currently doing phd Conservator, local authority
Research	Researcher, freelance Collections researcher, local authority
Design	Designer, freelance Ex-design consultant, private company

Fundraising	Trust fundraiser, national
Operational	Operations manager, independent Project officer, national Ex-HR, national
Audience engagement	Director of engagement, independent Head of participation, regional Community engagement, local authority Temporary visitor experience consultant, national Engagement coordinator, university museum Outreach officer, freelance Outreach consultant Ex-events officer, national
Front of house	Front of house, university Front of house, independent Saturday receptionist, independent
Student or doctoral	Doctoral researcher
Volunteer	Apprentice, local authority Volunteer guide, national
Unemployed	Unemployed, just finished volunteering Unemployed, designer Unemployed marketing Student, seeking work

Appendix M: Consent form for phase three

The museum of them and us

Research into museum work, difference and social class (phase three)

Samantha Evans (PhD Researcher), and Dr Rebecca Whiting (Supervisor)
Department of Organizational Psychology, Birkbeck, University of London

Please read the following before participating in this research:

1. I have read the Information Sheet and the Briefing/Topic Guide (attached), my questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

2. I agree to take part and provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my name and the names of any individuals of organisations that I talk about will be anonymised in the analysis and final publication or dissemination of this research. The data will only be seen by the researcher and by a professional transcriber, bound by a strict code of confidentiality.

3. If submitting actual photos to the Museum of them and us, then I will adhere to the guidance below and consent to my pictures being used for the purposes of this research *

4. I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time until the end of this phase of research has been concluded 1st October 2018.

5. I understand I have the right decline to answer any particular questions.

6. I agree to the face-to-face or Skype interview being recorded. I understand that I have the right to ask for the audio-tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet

Signed by:

The researcher: ……. Date: ……

The interviewee: …….. Date: ……

Additional advice and consent for photos

Taking or using photos to contribute: *The museum of them and us*

If you plan to take and submit your own photos to the Museum of them and us, please follow these simple guidelines.

Taking photos

1. Asking any person/s who are the subjects of your photographs for permission to use the image is considered best practice, so use the form below if you can. But in public places, where people are carrying out business in public, for large crowds, or when attending public events, this is not essential.

2. You may need to avoid photographing anything that invades another person's privacy or contravenes your organisation's confidentiality policy (for example the visible contents of documents or computer screens).

3. As taker of the image, you will retain the copyright. I will ask you for your permission to use each picture beyond the purposes of research, so you will be in full control at every stage.

Using existing images

4. If you are suggesting existing images taken by someone else, then images can be used copyright free for non-commercial research purposes, such as this one.

5. For any communication of the image, beyond the research, which does not fall into the purposes of non-commercial research or teaching, then I will seek permission.

For the taker of an image (for release of the image)

- I agree for the photograph of me to be used for the purposes of research into museum careers and understand it will only be used for non-commercial research and teaching purposes. YES/NO

- I agree to the photograph of me to be used for the communication of this research to interested academics and stakeholders, for non-commercial gain YES/NO

Signed……
Date…….

The above guidance is based on the Crown Copyright Act (2015) and exceptions to this (2014), the Data Protection Act (1998) interpreted by JISC (2017), and the ethical guidance of the International Visual Sociology Association (accessed 2018)

Appendix N: Interview guide for phase three

These were sent to email participants to self-complete and sent as a guide to other participants to reflect on before the interview

THE MUSEUM OF THEM AND US
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Thank you so much for taking part. Part A looks at your career in particular and Part B looks at working in museums in general. You don't need to answer every question if you don't want to and please be assured that all answers will be anonymised and confidential. Only I, the researcher, will see them. Please also see the attached consent form and return a signed copy of this.

Advice on completing the questions

- You can take as much time and space as you like in answering the following questions. Or as little.
- Try and be as open and as honest as possible. You don't need to "sell" your experience or send me your CV. It is more important to reflect on things.
- Feel free to ask me if you don't understand what I am asking. It is my first draft of questions so these may need input from you!
- Don't worry about typos or spelling.
- I am asking you to send a picture (see question 7), which is another way for you and I to make sense of your career! But you don't have to do this.

A) YOUR CAREER AND SOCIAL CLASS

1) Can you tell me about your background? What did your parents or guardians do, where did you grow up and what education did you have? How would you describe your social class background?

2) What is your current situation? What work do you do (if any), if you don't work in museums what would you like to do? What is the contribution that your work (that you do or would like to do) makes to museums in general? What skills do you need to be able to do this?

3) How did working/volunteering in museums come about? Was this a deliberate career choice and if so why?

4) Can you describe the journey in between, from when you left school to your current situation? Tell me about the education you have undertaken, the different work/experience you have had, what has shaped your decisions along the way, and how you have got to your current situation?

Take as long and as much space as you like! I have attached the timeline which can help.

5) What has made this journey difficult along the way, and what has helped you?

6a)? Do you think your social class has been an issue in any way for your career? If so, how?

b) Would you say your social class has changed at all along the way? How has this happened?

7a) Can you think of a museum object or image that could represent your career? If possible attach a picture of it. You are welcome to take a picture (please see guidelines attached)
b) Can you describe why this represents your career?

B) THE MUSEUM SECTOR AND SOCIAL CLASS

7) Museum work is often described as middle class. Do you think this is the case?
Are all roles and all people middle class?

8) Are there certain types of roles or work that are difficult to achieve in museums?

9) Do you think having a certain class background enables some people and not others in pursuing museum career?

10) Have you encountered class prejudice (direct or indirect) within the museum sector?

11) Do you have any thoughts on what the sector can do to make it easier for people from different class backgrounds to work in the sector?

12) Is there anything else you would like to add?

THANK YOU SO MUCH

These responses are confidential. Any person or organisation will be anonymised.
Your participation is really invaluable, so thank you very much for taking the time to answer these. I am spending the summer of 2018 analysing the data and I will develop some initial themes that I will share with you in the autumn. But if you have any further thoughts, ideas or questions on this use please do get in contact sam.evans@bbk.a.c.uk or twitter @samisatwork

Appendix O: Coding Template used in initial data analysis

Level One Theme: Field	
Level Two	Level Three
The edges & context	Funding context • Political capital • Political autonomy or heteronomy
	Boundaries: what it is/ not (distinction)
The structure of the field	Hierarchy/boundaries of museums Obscuring of economic capital though this is critical Hegemony of nationals; inherited capital; reflects class
	Boundaries: Professionalisation of museums (formal legitimation which is missing for people)
	Purpose of museums (contested)
Museum Practice	Enterprise Discourse: (innovation, risk, creativity, language of market) Contradictory relationship to funding
	Collections versus audience Link to funding, purpose of museum and skills/roles
	Discourse: The rise of stories versus expertise (representation) or democracy (stories/experience)
	Discourse around leadership
	Absence of digital

Level One Theme: Career	
Level Two	Level Three
Career: Skills and roles	Hierarchy & trajectory of roles Specialisation or generalisation Increasing move to both (or both)
Career journeys	Getting in and on in museums (Crossing and shifting boundaries – who can move up)
	Personalisation -Psychological capital
	Individualisation – • Culturpreneurial • Boundaryless Taking on risk and responsibility
	Why (not) work in museums?
	Age and career • The "ideal" career path • Age & progression • Not transferring in
	Being a "museum professional" – who can claim this
	Workforce issues

Level One Theme: Class and classed inequality	
Level Two	Level Three
Knowing class	Everyday seeing class & diversity (In) visibility "Class work"

	Knowing class & diversity Representation (objective) or experience (self-identity and stories)
Class as problem	Class (diversity) in context
	Rationale for diversity - Moral case Museum case (Collections & Audiences)
	Diversity as practice
	Worker Issues (mainly affecting certain grades)

Level one theme: change in field (new theme)	
Change within sector	How changes happens - people and ideas

Appendix P: Discourse 'hypotheses' from phase two data

Field	
Boundaries around field (history)	Museums as cultural elite
	Museums as reluctant businesses
	Museums as social engagers
Hierarchies within field Distinctiveness to and of the field	Specialist versus generalist
	New versus old (confusing tensions)
	Visible versus not visible
Career	
Ways of doing	Cummulative (accumulating capital)
	Committed (to the field)
	Culturepreneurial (being enterprising with little money)
	Chance (language of luck)
Ways of being	Clubbable (fitting in) or changemaking?
Ways of having	Cultural versus economic capital
Class	
Invisibility	Invisibility of economic
	Invisibility of workforce
	Invisibility of certain roles
	Invisibility of class

Appendix Q: Discourses used for final analysis

Distinguishing the field	Museums, the market and the state
	Exclusive versus inclusive
Knowing class	In general context
	In field context
	In research context
	Collections meritocracy

Distinctions within field	Distinguishing knowledge
	Market for recognition
	Good market for funders
Distinction, classed	Homologous with field (and taken for granted)
Distinction, unclassed	Unequal benefits of distinction
Playing for distinction	Games of distinction
Ways of being	The dedicated habitus
	The enterprising habitus
Ways of having	Distinguishing capital
	Discursive capital
Knowing and showing class	Changing class
	Changing context

Appendix R: Dissemination at conferences and publications

Academic

Evans, S, Whiting, R. and Mackenzie-Davey, K. (2020) *Struggling for distinction; Classing as discursive process in UK museum work. Gender, Work and Organization (early view)*
Jan 2020

Evans, S and Whiting, R. *The 'working-class' museum-worker; hardworking yet invisible***.** **July 2019**
Book chapter proposal accepted for Routledge Collection, Museums and the Working Class; contract has been signed, and chapter due for resubmission September 2020.

Evans, S and Whiting, R. *Working-class heroes? Class as discursive struggle in UK museum work.* **July 2018**
Paper accepted for 34th EGOS Colloquium, sub theme Diversity and
Diversity Management: Beyond the Familiar into the Unexpected. Tallinn, Estonia.

Evans, S. and Whiting, R. *'Part of the middle-class' now: constructing class in UK museum work.* **July 2018**
Paper accepted for 13th International Conference on Organizational Discourse, City University, London.

Practitioner

Classed inequality in UK museum work **Nov 2019**
Seminar proposal accepted and delivered for National Partnerships Conference, British Museum

Does social class matter for museum careers? **Nov 2018**
Conference session for **Museums Association Conference 2018** (Belfast)

Examining the class system in British museum employment **April 2018**
Invited to write blog article for **Birkbeck's Research News**

Addressing the surprising absence of class **Nov 2017**
Invited to write blog article for Dr Stephanie Taylor, **Open University, Social Psychology Department**